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THE ART

OF

EXTEMPORE SPEAKING.

HINTS

FOR

THE PULPIT, THE SENATE, AND THE BAR.

Louis Eugène Marie
BY M. BAUTAIN,

VICAR-GENERAL AND PROFESSOR AT THE SORBONNE, ETC. ETC.

WITH ADDITIONS

BY A

MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK BAR.

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PREFACE.

THE following Work, by the eloquent M. BAUTAIN, has no counterpart or rival in the English language, so prolific of treatises upon Rhetoric, and the separate portions of the arts of composition and delivery. All those parts of oratory, however necessary to public speaking, or conducive to success in its performance, yet leave comparatively aside the precise business of off-hand extemporising. If we mistake not, the subject will be found to be handled with masterly ability by the author of this volume, who, keeping his end ever in view, and exemplifying in the treatment of his matter that *clarté*—so distinctively *French*, and which Quintilian says is the first quality of style—subordinates everything to the one grand purpose of extemporisation.

The treatise not only supplies a *desideratum* in the literature of the language, but it ministers to a need peculiarly existing under our representative system of popular government. It is true, and felt to be so,—that remark of an acute observer of American institutions and manners, that "In no country whatever is a genius for writing or speaking a more useful or commanding endowment than in this." To render the work more aptly suited to the precise requirements among ourselves, three chapters are added by the American Editor, which it is hoped will serve to smooth the way for the unpractised or unassisted student of delivery. Cicero says in his treatise *De Oratore*, "There is requisite to the orator the acuteness of the logician, the subtilty of the philosopher, the skilful harmony, almost, of the poet, the memory of a juriconsult, the tragedian's voice, and the gesture of the most finished actors." But he speaks of the highest, for he adds immediately that "nothing is more rare among men than a perfect orator." The gradations, as in all arts, are infinite, but a certain degree, is within the reach of most men, and many in their efforts to advance, will become indebted, consciously or unconsciously, to this admirable little work of M. Bautain.

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THE ART

OF

EXTEMPORE SPEAKING.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

EXPOSITION OF THE SUBJECT.—DEFINITION OF AN EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEECH.

Let us in the first place exactly determine the subject to which we are to devote our attention, in order that nothing may be expected beyond that which it is our wish and our power to commit to these pages.

We have no intention of composing a treatise on eloquence. The world has had enough on this subject since the time of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Fenelon, and many others.

Treatises on rhetoric abound, and it appears scarcely necessary to produce a new one.

It is not proposed to treat of the art of writing, nor, consequently, of reciting or properly delivering a discourse elaborated at leisure, and learnt by heart.

A man may certainly become a great orator by writing speeches and reciting them well. Witness Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Massillon, and many others. It is possible in this manner to instruct, to touch the feelings, and to persuade the hearer; which is the object of the art of oratory.

Our subject is confined within narrower limits, viz. to the art of speaking well and suitably in a given situation, whether in the Christian pulpit or in the professorial chair, at the bar or in deliberative assemblies. We shall therefore confine our attention solely to a discourse, neither written nor learnt by heart, but improvised; necessarily composed by the orator on the very moment of delivery, without any preparation or previous combination of phrases. Let us then determine, in the first place, what is an improvised (or extempore) speech, and the manner in which a speech is extemporised.

Extemporisation consists of speaking on the first impulse; that is to say, without a preliminary arrangement of phrases. It is the instantaneous manifestation, the expression, of an actual thought, or the sudden explosion of a feeling or mental movement.

It is very evident that extemporisation can act only on the form of words, the form of a discourse; for, in order to speak, it is necessary to have something to say, and that something must already be existing in the mind, or still more deeply in the intimate feeling of the orator. Nevertheless, the thought or feeling may be in a concealed state, and the possessor may not have clearly appreciated or distinctly perceived it at the moment of opening his lips under the impression of some circumstance or some unforeseen cause of excitement.

Ideas and conditions of the mind cannot be extemporised; and the more perfectly they are possessed or felt the greater is the probability of their lively explosion or of their being developed with force and clearness.

We will not speak of those exceptional cases where a passion, involuntarily excited or aroused, bursts forth of a sudden in some sublime words, or with an eloquent harangue. "Facit indignatio versum," says Juvenal.

Every feeling unexpectedly aroused in an excited mind may, like a volcano, scatter around burning lava, or like a cloud, charged with storms and bursting suddenly from electric commotion, produce thunder and lightning, a terrible and devastating hail or a salutary and fertilising shower. No advice can be given for such a situation, for nature alone furnishes the means, in proportion to individual constitution and development. There lies the source of all poetry, of all eloquence, and of all artistic power. Improvisation such as this recognises no rules, and rejects teaching. The coarsest, the most ignorant man may thus occasionally be eloquent, if he feel vividly and express himself energetically, in words and gesture.

We will devote our attention only to prepared extempore speaking, that is to say, to those addresses which have to be delivered in public before a specified auditory, on a particular day, on a given subject, and with the view of achieving a certain result.

It is true that in such cases the discourse, if written beforehand, can be recited or read.

There are some persons who are masters of recitation or of reading, and can thus produce a great effect. In this manner, doubtless, both thoughts and words can be better weighed, and the speaker can deliver what he has to say with greater precision. But there is this drawback, that the discourse is colder, less apposite, and approximates too nearly to dissertation. Nay, should any unforeseen circumstance occur, such as an objection, a rejoinder, or a discussion of any kind, the speaker not expecting, may find himself stopped short or at fault, to the great detriment of his cause or his subject. Moreover, a preacher, a professor, or a senator, who is liable to be called upon to speak at any moment, has not always the time to compose a discourse, still less to learn it by rote. In speaking from his fulness, therefore, as the saying is, he can speak oftener, and produce a greater effect, if he speak well.

His speaking will also be more lively and brilliant,—more real, and more apposite. Originating with the occasion, and at the very moment, it will bear more closely on the subject, and strike with greater force and precision. His words will be warmer from their freshness, and they will in this manner communicate increased fervour to the audience. They will have all the energy of an instantaneous effort, and of a sudden burst.

The vitality of thought is singularly stimulated by this necessity of instantaneous production, by this actual necessity of self-expression, and of communication to other minds. It is a kind of child-bearing in public, of which the speaker feels all the effort and all the pain, and in this he is assisted and supported by the sympathy of his hearers, who witness with lively interest this labour of mental life, and who receive with pleasure this bantling of thought; that is to say, an idea well conceived and brought to light; well formed, with a fine expression, or with a body of graceful and well-constructed phraseology.

But it is not our object to compare these two methods of public speaking, nor to place in the balance their advantages and defects. It is possible to excel in both ways, and every one must endeavour to discover the manner which best suits him, and the method by which, according to his nature, his qualities, and his position, his words can achieve the greater amount of good, instruct more clearly and more fully, and touch the heart more effectually. What suits one does not suit another. God distributes his gifts as seems best to Him; and every tree bears fruit according to its kind. It is important for man to discover the gift he has received, to make use of it with usury, and to discharge faithfully his high vocation. "Fiunt oratores, nascuntur poetæ," has said Quintilian; meaning, doubtless, that poetic genius is a gift from heaven, and that oratorical talent can be acquired. This is only half true; for if teaching and labour can contribute to the formation of an orator, neither one nor the other will give him the germ and the power of eloquence. They can excite and nourish, but they can never ignite the sacred fire.

But amongst those who have received this divine gift of words some have only been enabled to exercise it with the pen, and occasionally even the most eloquent writers are incapable of delivering in public that which they konw so well to compose in private. They are troubled and embarrassed before even the least imposing audience. J. J.

Rousseau could never speak in public; and the Abbé de Lamennais, whose style is so vigorous, never ventured to enter the pulpit, and was unable to address even a meeting of children.

Others, on the contrary, possess the faculty of easily expressing in public their feelings and their thoughts. The presence of hearers stimulates them, and augments the elasticity of their mind and the vivacity of their tongue. It is these only that we shall address, for we have spoken in this manner through life and have never been able to do otherwise. Many a time, however, have we made the attempt, by preparing an exordium, a tirade, or a peroration, with the intention of speaking better or in a more striking manner. But we have never succeeded in reciting what we had prepared, and in the manner in which we had constructed it. Our laboured compositions have always missed their object, and have made us embarrassed or obscure. Thus, it appears, we were made, and we have been forced to follow our nature. In such matters the lesson to be learnt is in turning to account the demands of nature which must be satisfied.

As extemporising a speech regards the form only, as has been before stated, it follows that, before attempting to speak in this manner, two things are necessary. 1. The foundation of the discourse, or the thought and succession of thoughts to be expressed. 2. The means of expression, or the language in which they are to be spoken, so as to avoid the necessity of seeking the words at the same moment as the ideas, and the risk of stopping short of or being embarrassed in the composition of the phraseology. In other terms, the speaker must know what he wishes to say and how to say it.

Improvisation, therefore, supposes the special qualifications on which we are about to speak, not precisely with the view of teaching the means of acquiring them, as for the most part they are gifts of nature; but to induce those to cultivate and develope them who have the good fortune to possess them; and, above all, to point out the signs by which any one may discover whether he be capable of speaking in public, and how, in so doing, to succeed.

CHAP. II.

THE QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING.

At the root of every real talent, whatever it may be, there lies a natural aptness, conferring on the person endowed with it a particular power; and this aptness depends alike on the intellectual temperament and the physical organisation; for man being essentially composed of mind and body, all that he does in reason, or in his quality as a reasonable being, comes from these two portions of his being and from their mutual relations. The mind commands, it is true, and the body must obey like an instrument; but the instrument has also its influence, especially over the talent of the artist, by the manner in which it responds to his wishes, to his feelings, to the motions which he communicates to it, to the vigour which he seeks to display. Thus speaking is an art and the finest of arts; it should express the mind by form, ideas by words, feelings by sounds, all that the mind feels, thinks, and wishes by signs and external action. To obtain skill in this art, therefore, there are some qualifications which regard the mind, and others which depend on the body.

The dispositions of the mind are natural or acquired. The former, which we are about to set forth in this chapter, are—

1. A lively sensibility.
2. A penetrating intelligence.
3. A sound reason, or, as it is commonly called, good sense.
4. A prompt imagination.
5. A firm and decisive will.
6. A natural necessity of expansion, or of communicating to others ideas and feelings.
7. Finally, a certain instinct which urges a man to speak, as a bird to sing.

§ 1.—*A lively Sensibility.*

Art has its root in sensibility, and although it depends much on the body, and especially on the nerves which are its physical medium, sensibility is nevertheless one of the principal powers of the mind, not to say a faculty, as the word faculty denotes a manner of acting, and as sensibility is a manner of suffering or of sustaining an action.

Thus the mind which lives only by its affinities, and which for action always requires an impression, acts only in proportion to the incitements it receives, and the manner in which it receives them. It is, therefore, in this peculiar manner of receiving and appropriating impressions of things that consists the vivacity of sensibility necessary to speaking, as to every artistic expression. Every man feels according to his sensitiveness; but all do not feel in the same manner, and thus are neither able to express what they feel in the same manner, nor disposed to the same kind of expression. Hence vocation to the different arts, or the natural inclination of the mind to express one particular thing which it feels the more, and with the greater pleasure. In this, also, lies the origin of taste in art, and for a particular art, whether in the exercise of such art or in the appreciation of its works. Some have more taste and facility in the plastic arts; others in the acoustic arts; and even in the exercise of the same art there are different dispositions to a certain mode of expression which produce different styles. Thus in poetry there are poets who compose odes, epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, satyr, idyls and eclogues, &c. &c., which are all poetic expressions of the human mind; and so far they resemble each other; but they differ in the object which they reproduce, in the manner of representing it, and a poet in one style rarely succeeds in another. He can sing in one strain and not otherwise, as the song of a lark is not that of a nightingale.

It is thus in the art of speaking, in eloquence as regards the object to be expressed. One speaker is more suited to set forth ideas, their connexion, and their gradations. He discerns perfectly the congruity, the difference, the contrast of thoughts, and thus he will deliver them suddenly with much facility, delicacy, and subtilty. He has perception, a taste for idea; he conceives it distinctly, and will therefore enunciate it gracefully and clearly. Such a one is made to teach and instruct.

Another has a greater enjoyment of everything relating to the feelings, the affections, to soft or strong emotions. He will therefore employ with greater pleasure and greater success all that can touch, move, and hurry away: he will, above all, cause the fibres of the heart to vibrate. Such a one will be an orator rather than a professor, and will be better able to persuade by emotion than to convince by reason.

A third delights in images and pictures. He feels more vividly everything that he can grasp and reproduce in his imagination; he therefore takes pleasure in these reproductions. Such a one will therefore be specially a descriptive speaker, and will rise almost to poetry in his prose. He will speak to the imagination of his hearers rather than to their heart or mind: he will affect but little, and instruct still less; but he will be able to amuse and interest, he will attract by originality, by the variety of his pictures, and by the vivacity and brilliancy of his colouring.

In these different instances we see that sensibility is vividly excited either by ideas, by feelings, or by images; and it is evident that he who would extemporise a discourse in one of these three methods must begin by feeling vividly the subject of which he has to speak, and that his expression will always be proportionate to the impression of it he will have received and retained.

But if sensibility must be strong, it must nevertheless not be excited to excess; for it then renders expression impossible from the agitation of the mind and the over-excitement of the nervous system, which paralyses the organs. Thus, the precept of Horace, "Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi," is true only for those who write in their closet, and does not apply to the orator. Before the public, he must not weep, nor even be moved to such a point that his voice will fail him, or be stifled by sobs; he must weep with his voice, and not with his eyes; he should have tears in his voice, but so as to be master of them.

At times, doubtless, a great effect may be produced by the very inability to speak, caused by the enthusiasm of feeling or the violence of grief; but then the discourse is finished, or, rather, it is no longer needed, and little matter, if the object be attained. But, for the art of oratory, sensibility must be restrained sufficiently at least for words to run their proper course. The feelings must not explode at once, but escape little by little, so as gradually to animate the whole body of the discourse. It is thus that art idealises nature in rejecting all that from instinct or passion may be too rough or impetuous. The character of Christian art, that which renders it sublime, is, that in all its works there is a predominance of mind over matter, of the soul over the body, of man over nature. Christian feeling is never intemperate, never disorderly. It is always restrained within a certain point by the power of that will which, assisted by the higher strength supporting it, governs events, or rather, does not yield to them; and when it appears overcome it bends beneath the storm of adversity, but is righted by resignation, and does not break. It is more than the thinking reed of Pascal; it is a reed that wills. For this reason the types of Christian art will never be surpassed. Never beneath the sun will there be seen images more sublime or more beautiful than the figures of Jesus Christ and the Virgin. In this point of view the Christian orator, inasmuch as he is a Christian, is very superior to the Pagan orator: he conceives, he feels very differently, both earthly and heavenly things, and his manner of feeling is more spiritual, pure, and worthy of man, for being less material, it gives to his expression something noble, elevated and superhuman, approaching the language of heaven.

The same may be said for the statement of ideas. It is doubtless necessary that they should be felt strongly with all that they embrace, so that they may be analysed and developed; that the developed may be re-embodied, again concentrated, and reduced to unity. In this operation there is an infinity of gradations which must be delicately perceived and appreciated. But if this feeling become too strong, or take too completely possession of the mind, analysis or exposition becomes impossible; the speaker is absorbed by the contemplation only of the general idea, is unable to enter upon its development, and from that moment he is incapable of speaking. This is the case with men of genius, but of an exaggerated mental sensibility, who feel the necessity of writing to display their thoughts, because they require time to reflect and recover themselves from the fulness of the idea which overcomes them at first, or when they are required to speak of a sudden. Such was probably the case with Rousseau, who was endowed with remarkable sensibility of mind. It may even happen that a too vehement and over exclusive perception of an idea may convert it into a fixed idea, and may lead to madness. Everything is so well balanced in our existence, everything must be done in such measure and proportion, that, no sooner do we exceed, however little, that mean point where lies the relative perception of humanity,—than we fall into exaggeration, which destroys and renders powerless as much as deficiency itself.—*In medio virtus.*

For description, sensibility, and even exquisite sensibility, is required, but here also not too much, otherwise we wander to impressions of detail, and we end by producing a species of poem or monograph of each flower or object which pleases us.

It is what is called in painting *tableaux de genre*, which may for an instant attract and amuse, but which do not represent one deep idea or one worthy of art. It is in literature that kind of poetry or romance which the Germans, and especially the English, delight in, and which consists in painting in the greatest detail the commonest things of life. Impressions are then taken from the domestic hearth, from the life of a family, or of a country, as æsthetic sentiments, as effects of art, falling into a paltry realism, which lowers art in making it descend to the commonplace and absurdities of reality. Finally, it is the defect of those preachers who delight in continual descriptions, whether of physical or of moral nature, whose sermons, subject to their taste for imagery, are only galleries of pictures which may amuse those who think to recognise in them the portraits of others, but which can never instruct nor touch any one. He who would speak well, therefore, must feel what he has to say with sufficient strength to express it with warmth and vivacity; but his feeling must not attain that vehemence which prevents the mind from acting, and paralyses the expression from the very fulness of the feeling. This would be a sort of intellectual apoplexy, taking away the gift of speech, and rendering it powerless by excess of life.

§ 2.—*Keen Intelligence.*

In speaking, the feeling or that which is felt, must be resolved into ideas, thoughts, images, and thence into words, phrases, language, as a cloud or condensed vapour is transformed and distilled into rain. "Eloquium Domini sicut imbres," says the Psalmist. The faculty which effects this transformation, by the operation of the mind accounting inwardly and reflectively for all that is passing through it, is intelligence, or the faculty of reading in ourselves. It is for this reason that animals possessing sensibility, and at times senses even more subtle than those of man, are incapable of speaking, in a strict sense, although, like all other beings on earth, and especially living beings, they have a spontaneous language, by which is naturally manifested all that takes place in them. They have no intelligence, and thus they have neither consciousness nor reflection, though there exists in them a principle of life, gifted with sensibility and instinct, which gives them the semblance of human intelligence, but it cannot be maintained that they are reasonable, which would imply liberty and moral responsibility for their acts. For reason to exist, it is necessary that the mind, capable of feeling and seeing, should have the power of self-possession by means of reflection, and to consider and analyse by thought all that it has perceived and seen. Thus is formed in us an intellectual world peopled by our conceptions, that is to say, with ideas, with notions and images, which we can compare, combine, and divide in a thousand manners, according to their approximation or their difference; and which are finally expressed in speech,—the successive development of which is always the analysis of thought.

Thus every extemporised discourse presupposes a preliminary operation of thought. The thought must have been well conceived, held, and grasped in a single idea which contains the whole substance. Then, for the exposition of this idea, it must have been divided into its principal parts, or into other subordinate ideas as members of it, and then again into others still more minutely, until the subject is exhausted. This multitude of thoughts must be well arranged, so that at the very moment each may arrive in the place marked out for it, and appear in its turn in the discourse to play its part and fulfil its function, the value of which consists in the antecedents which prepare and the consequences which develope it, as figures in an arithmetical operation have value in themselves and also by their position.

Much intelligence is therefore required for this preparatory labour, so useful in extemporisation; or, in other words, for the elaboration of a plan, without which it would be risk to hazard on ground so dangerous and so slippery. The first condition of speaking is to know what is intended to be said, and the greater the intelligence employed in the preparation of the speech, and the more clearly is it conceived, the greater the probability of presenting it well to others or of speaking well.

That which is well conceived is clearly enunciated.

Nevertheless, this first labour is not sufficient; it is easy enough in the silence of the closet, pen in hand, to elaborate a plan to be committed to paper, and polished at leisure. But this plan must pass from the paper to the head, and be there established in divisions and subdivisions, according to the order of thoughts both as a whole and in detail; which cannot be well done, and in a sure and lasting manner, unless the mind keeps the ideas linked by their intimate, and not by their superficial relations; —by accidental or purely external associations, such as are formed by the imagination and the senses. In a word, there must reign between all the parts of the plan an order of filiation or generation; which is called the logical connection. Thus, the logical connexion is the product of the intelligence which intuitively perceives the connexion of ideas, even the most removed and the most profound; and of the reason which completes the view of the intelligence, by showing on the one hand connexion by a chain of intermediary ideas, and on the other the order of this connexion, by means of reflection, and unites them in a thought to be presented, or an end to be attained.

Then comes a third step, which exacts even a greater subtilty and greater promptitude of mind. This plan which has been committed to paper, which is now carefully kept in the head, must be realised in words, and endowed with flesh and life in the discourse. It is like dry bones which, by the breath of the orator, are of a sudden to reassume their muscles, nerves and skin, and to rise, each in its place, to form a living body, beautiful to behold. The speaker must successively pass before his hearers all that he carries in his mind—all his ideas, in suddenly giving to each, in its place, body, covering, colour, and life. He should, however, while speaking, Janus-like, see double; within, at his plan; without, at the thread of his discourse; so as to keep within the line of his thought, without disturbing his arrangement, or diverging. He must, finally, be able, as on a day of battle, suddenly to modify what he has beforehand prepared; following whatever may present itself, and this without relinquishing his principal idea, which sustains all, and without which he would become the plaything of chance. He requires still many things, which will be pointed out later, when we shall have to speak of the discourse itself; and all of which, like those which we have just mentioned, presumes the exercise of an intense, rapid, and most penetrating intelligence.

§ 3.—*Right Reason or Good Sense.*

A great deal of talent may exist without common sense, and this is often the case with clever persons, and especially those who wish to appear clever. By endeavouring to study objects under new phases, to say new things, or things apparently new, they end by never considering them in a right light; and the habit of regarding them in all manner of aspects, takes away the faculty of seeing them in full and directly, in their true meanings and natural bearings.

Now, nothing is so fatal to extemporisation as this wretched facility of the mind for losing itself in details, and neglecting the main point. Without at this moment speaking of the construction of the plan, wherein simplicity and clearness, to which good sense is singularly conducive, ought, above all things, to prevail, it is evident that this quality, so useful in conduct and in business, is more than ever so in the instantaneous formation of a discourse, and in the dangerous task of extemporising, whether as regards matter or manner.

Good sense is the instinctive action of right reason, discriminating with a rapidity of feeling, and by a sort of taste, what is or is not suitable in any given situation. Therefore, it is a sudden appreciation of a thousand bearings depending on circumstances, as when, amidst the fervor of delivery and from the general effect of the address—things not to be estimated by the plan alone, but declaring themselves on the instant—an idea on which stress should be laid—what part of it should be neglected—what should be compressed—what should be enlarged upon—must all be promptly seized. Then a new thought which suggests itself and must be introduced—an explanation which might run to too great a length and which must be abridged—an emotion or effect to be excited as you pass on without losing sight of the main effect—a digression into which you may enter without breaking the guiding thread of this labyrinth and while at need recovering it—all have to be judged of, decided upon, and executed at the very moment itself, and during the unsuspended progress of the discourse.

Tact!

The same applies to the form or style of the speech. How many mental and literary proprieties to be observed! A doubtful phrase coming into the mouth and to be discarded,—an ambitious, pretentious expression to be avoided,—a trite or commonplace term which occurs and to be excluded,—a sentence which is opened with a certain boldness and the close of which is not yet clear,—even while you are finishing the development of one period, your view thrown forward to the next thought, and to the link which is to connect it with that which you are ending! Truly there is enough to produce giddiness when one reflects on the matter; nevertheless, the discernment of such a multiplicity of points must be instantaneous, and indeed it is performed with a kind of certainty, and as it were of its own accord, if the subject have been fitly prepared, if you be thoroughly in possession of it, and if you be well inclined at the moment.

But in order to walk with this direct and firm step through a discourse, which arises, as it were, before the orator in proportion as he advances, like an enchanted forest, all teeming with sorceries and apparitions, in which so many different paths cross each other,—in order to accept none of these brilliant phantoms save those which can be serviceable to the subject, dispelling like vain shadows all the rest,—in order to choose exactly the road which best leads to your destination, and, above all, to keep constantly in that which you have marked out for yourself beforehand, shunning all the other byways, however alluring they may appear, and not allowing yourself to be carried away or to swerve from your line, either in gait or deportment,—you most assuredly require that clear, decisive, and certain sight which good sense gives, and that kind of instinct or taste for truth which it alone produces.

§ 4.—*Readiness of Imagination.*

Imagination is like a double-faced mirror, in part turned towards the outer world, and reflecting its objects, in part towards the light of ideas, tinging it with its hues, forming it into representations, and disposing it in pictures, while decomposing it as the prism the solar ray. It is thus that speech renders metaphysical objects more approachable and comprehensible; it gives them a body, or a raiment, which makes them visible and almost palpable.

Imagination is one of the most necessary of the orator's faculties, and especially to him who extemporises, first, in order that he may be able to fix his plan well in his mind—for it is chiefly by means of the imagination that it is there fixed, or painted; in the second place, in order that it may be preserved there in full life, well connected, and well arranged, until the moment for realising it or putting it forth by means of the discourse. Imagination is also very useful to him in order to represent suddenly to himself what he wishes to express to others when a new thought arises, and when an image, germinating, as it were, in the heat of oratorical action, like a flower opening forthwith under the sun's rays, is presented unexpectedly to the mind. Then the instant he has a glimpse of it, after having rapidly decided whether it suits the subject and befits its place, he, while yet speaking, seizes it eagerly, passes it warm beneath the active machinery of the imagination, extends, refines, developes, makes it ductile and glittering, and marks it at once with some of the types or moulds which imagination possesses. Or else, if we may be allowed another comparison, the thought passes through the presses of the imagination, like those sheets of paper which revolve between the cylinders of mechanical presses, and issue forth all covered with characters and images.

Now this most complicated and subtle labour must be performed with the quickness of lightning, amidst the onward current of the discourse, which cannot be arrested or slackened without becoming languid. The imagination ought then to be endowed with great quickness in the formation and variation of its pictures; but it requires also great clearness, in order to produce at the first effort, a well-marked image, the lines and outlines defined with exactitude, and the tints bright,—so that language has only to reproduce it unhesitatingly, and unconfusedly, as an object is faithfully represented in a spotless glass. For you must not grope for your words while speaking, under penalty of braying like a donkey, which is the death of a discourse. The expression of the thought must be effected at the first stroke, and decidedly—a condition which hinders many men, and even men of talent, from speaking in public. Their imagination is not sufficiently supple, ready, or clear; it works too slowly, and is left behind by the lightning of the thought, which at first dazzles it, a result due either to a natural deficiency, or to want of practice; or else—and this is the most general case with men of talent, it arises from allowing the mind to be too much excited and agitated in the presence of the public and in the hurry of the moment; whence a certain incapacity for speaking, not unlike inability to walk produced by giddiness.

§ 5.—*Firmness and Decision of Will.*

Unquestionably courage is necessary to venture upon speaking in public. To rise before an assembly, often numerous and imposing, without books or notes, carrying everything in the head, and to undertake a discourse in the midst of general silence, with all eyes fixed on you, under the obligation of keeping that audience attentive and interested for three quarters of an hour, an hour, and sometimes longer, is assuredly an arduous task and a weighty burden. All who accept this burden, or have it imposed upon them, know how heavy it is, and what physical and mental suffering is experienced until it is discharged. Timidity or hesitation will make a person incapable of the duty; and such will always recoil from the dangers of the situation.

When, indeed, it is remembered, how little is required to disconcert and even paralyse the orator,—his own condition, bodily and moral, which is not always favourable at a given moment,—that of the hearers so unstable and prone to vary never known,—the distractions which may assail and divert him from his subject,—the failure perhaps of memory, so that a part of the plan, and occasionally its main division, may be lost on the instant,—the inertness of the imagination, which may play him false, and bring feebly and confusedly to the mind what it represents,—the escape of an unlucky expression,—the not finding the proper term,—a sentence badly begun, out of which he no longer knows his way,—and finally, all the influences to which he is subjected, and which converge upon him from a thousand eyes, —when all these things are borne in mind, it is truly enough to make a person lose head or heart, and the only wonder is that men can be found who will face such dangers, and fling themselves into the midst of them. Nor, indeed, ought they to be courted save when duty urges, when your mission enjoins it, or in order to fulfil some obligation of conscience or of position. Any other motive—such as ambition, vainglory, or interest—exposes you to cruel miscalculations and well-merited downfalls.

The strength of will needful to face such a situation is of course aided and sustained by a suitable preparation; and, of all preparations the best is to know well what you would say, and to have a clear conception of it. But yet, besides the possession of the idea and the chain of the thoughts on which you have a good hold, there is still the hazard of uttering appropriate or inappropriate words. Who is assured beforehand, that, on such a day, expressions will not prove rebellious to him, that the right phrase will come in the place appointed, and that language (like a sword) will not turn its edge? It is in the details of diction at the moment, or the instantaneous composition of the discourse and of sentences, that great decision is required to select words as they fly past, to control them immediately, and, amidst many unsuitable, to allow none but what are suitable to drop from the lips. Moreover, a certain boldness is required,—and who knows whether it will always be a successful boldness?—to begin the development of any sudden idea, without knowing whither it will lead you—to obey some oratorical inspiration which may carry you far away from the subject, and finally, to enter, and to jump, as it were, with both feet together, into a sentence, the issue of which you cannot foresee, particularly in French, which has only one possible class of terminations to its periods. Nevertheless, when once you have begun, you must rigidly beware of retreating by any break in the thought or in the sentence. You must go on daringly to the end, even though you take refuge in some unauthorised turn of expression or some incorrectness of language. Timid minds are frightened from adopting these extreme resources; for which reason we affirm that to expose oneself to this hazard,—and whoever extemporises does so,—decision and even a little rashness of will are necessary, beforehand and during the process, in order to sustain it, to undergo all without faint-ing, and to reach the destination without a serious wound, or, at all events, without a fall.

§ 6.—*Expansiveness of Character.*

There are two sorts of expansiveness, that of the mind and that of the heart.

The mind seeks after truth, which is its natural object.

Now truth is like light, or rather, it *is* the light of the intelligence; and this is why it is diffusive by its very nature, and spontaneously enters wherever an avenue is opened to it. When, therefore, we perceive or think that we perceive a truth, the mind rejoices in and feeds upon it, because it is its natural aliment; in assimilating and appropriating it, the mind partakes of its expansive force, and experiences the desire of announcing to others what it knows itself, and of making them see what it sees. It is its happiness to become a torch of this light, and to help in diffusing it. It sometimes even glories in the joy it feels; the pride also of enlightening our fellows, and so of ruling them to a certain extent, and of seeming above them, is part of the feeling. A keen and intelligent mind, which seeks truth, seizes it quickly and conceives it clearly, is more eager than another to communicate what it knows; and if, along with this, such a mind loves glory,—and who loves it not, at least in youth?—it will be impelled the more towards public speaking, and more capable of exercising the power of eloquence.

But there is, besides, a certain disposition of character and heart which contributes much to the same result, as is seen in women and children, who speak willingly and with great ease, on account of their more impressionable sensibility, the delicacy of their organs, and their extreme mobility. Something of this is required in the extemporiser. A self-centred person, who reflects a great deal and meditates long before he can perceive a truth or seize an analogy, and who either cannot or will not manifest what he feels or thinks until he has exactly shaped the expression of it, is not fitted for extemporaneous speaking. A melancholy, morose, misanthropic person, who shuns society, dreads the intercourse of men, and delights in solitary musing, will have a difficulty in speaking in public; he has not the taste for it, and his nature is against it. What is needed for this art, with a quick mind, is an open, confiding, and cheerful character, which loves men and takes pleasure in joining itself to others. Mistrust shuts the heart, the mind, and the mouth.

This expansiveness of character, which is favourable to extemporaneous speaking, has certainly its disadvantages also. It sometimes gives to the mind an unsettled levity and too much recklessness, and something venturesome or superficial to the style. But these disadvantages may be lessened or neutralized by a serious preparation, by a well-considered and well-defined plan, which will sustain and direct the exuberance of language, and remove by previous reflection the chances of digressiveness and inconsequence.

§ 7.—*Instinctive or natural Gift of Speaking.*

Art may develope, and perfect the talent of a speaker, but cannot produce it. The exercises of grammar and of rhetoric will teach a person how to speak correctly and elegantly; but nothing can teach him to be eloquent, or give that eloquence which comes from the heart and goes to the heart. All the precepts and artifices on earth can but form the appearances or semblance of it. Now this true and natural eloquence which moves, persuades, and transports, consists of a soul and a body, like man, whose image, glory, and word it is.

The soul of eloquence is the centre of the human soul itself, which, enlightened by the rays of an idea, or warmed and stirred by an impression, flashes or bursts forth to manifest, by some sign or other, what it feels or sees. This it is which gives movement and life to a discourse; it is like a kindled torch, or a shuddering and vibrating nerve.

The body of eloquence is the language which it requires in order to speak, and which must harmoniously clothe what it thinks or feels, as a fine shape harmonizes with the spirit which it contains. The material part of language is learnt instinctively, and practice makes us feel and seize its delicacies and shades. The understanding then, which sees rightly and conceives clearly, and the heart which feels keenly, find naturally, and without effort, the words and the arrangement of words most analogous to what is to be expressed. Hence the innate talent of eloquence, which results alike from certain intellectual and moral aptitudes, and from the physical constitution, especially from that of the senses and of the organs of the voice.

There are men organized to speak well as there are birds organized to sing well, bees to make honey, and beavers to build.

Doubtless, all men are capable of speaking, since they are rational beings, and the exercise of reason is impossible without speech; beyond all doubt, moreover, any man may become momentarily eloquent, being suddenly illuminated by an idea, by some passing inspiration, or the vehement impulse of a feeling, or a desire; bursts also and cries of passion are often of a high kind of eloquence. But it is the effect of an instant, which passes away with the unusual circumstances which have produced it; during the rest of their lives these same persons may speak very ill, and be incapable of pronouncing a sentence in public. They have not the gift of words, and those alone who are endowed with it by nature, can derive advantage from the advice we offer, in order to turn this precious talent to account in the service of truth and justice.

It is with eloquence as with all art; to succeed in it you must be made for it, or called to it incessantly, and in a manner almost unconquerable, by a mysterious tendency or inexplicable attraction, which influences the whole being, which ultimately turns to its object, as the magnetic needle to the north. At the root of all arts, so various in their expression, there is something in common to them all—namely, the life of the soul, the life of the mind, which feels the want of diffusing, manifesting, and multiplying itself; each individual also has something peculiar and original, by which he is impelled, on account of his special organisation, or constitution of mind and body, to reproduce his mental life in such or such a way, by such or such means, or in such or such a material form. Hence the boundless diversity of the arts and of their productions. Speech is certainly the noblest and most powerful of the arts: first, because by its nature, it is nearest to the intelligence whose ideas it alone perfectly expresses; secondly, in consequence of the higher purity, the more exquisite delicacy of its means of expression, being the least gross of any, holding on to earth by nothing save a light breath; lastly, on account of its great directness of action, so powerful over the mind, making it conceive things, comprehend thought, and grasp the truth.

In order, then, to exercise with success the art of speaking,—or to speak eloquently,—it is necessary to have a natural talent, which is a gift of Heaven, and which all science with its precepts, and all earth's teaching with its exercises, are unable to supply.

CHAP. III.

MENTAL APTITUDES FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING, CAPABLE OF BEING ACQUIRED, OR FORMED BY STUDY.

The dispositions which can be acquired, or formed by study, come next after the natural aptitudes of the mind, and these will be the subject of this chapter.

We give the name of acquired dispositions to certain aptitudes of mind, the germ of which is no doubt supplied by nature, but which may be called forth and developed in a remarkable manner by instruction, practice, and habit, whereas purely natural talent, although it also may be perfected by art, resembles, nevertheless, to a certain extent, that instinct which attains its object at the first effort. It may even happen that a remarkable acquired ability, such, for instance, as the art of speaking rhetorically, has but slight natural root, that is, but little real talent, producing nothing except by dint of art, practice, and toil; but if the natural root be absent, however beautiful the products may at first appear, people soon feel their artificial character and want of life.

The acquired mental aptitudes are, the *art or method of thinking* and the *art or method of saying.* But before considering them, we will say a few words about the orator's fund or store of acquirements, which must not be confounded with *acquired qualities.*

§ 1.—*Acquisitions or Fund needful to the Orator.*

The orator's capital is that sum of science or knowledge which is necessary to him in order to speak pertinently upon any subject whatever; and science or knowledge *are not extemporised.* Although knowledge does not give the talent for speaking, still he who knows well what he has to say, has many chances of saying it well, especially if he has a clear and distinct conception of it.

> "What you conceive aright you express clearly;
> And the words to say it in, come easily."

It is an excellent preparation, then, for the art of speaking to study perseveringly,—not merely the matter about which you have to discourse—a thing always done before speaking in public, unless a person be presumptuous and demented,—but generally all those subjects which form part of a liberal education, and which constitute the usual instruction of men intended for intellectual and moral professions. These were what were formerly termed classical studies, and they included grammar, rhetoric, logic, a certain portion of literature, history, mathematical and physical science, and religious knowledge. These "classical studies" were perfected and completed by the superior courses of the universities.

To have gone through a good educational career, or been distinguished at school, as it is commonly expressed, is an immense advantage; for it is in childhood and youth that the greatest number of things are learnt, and learnt best, in the sense, that knowledge acquired at that age is the most durable. It is more than this, it is ineffaceable, and constitutes an indestructible fund, a sort of mental ground-work upon which is raised all other instruction and education; and this fund, according to the manner in which it is placed in the mind determines the solidity and dimensions of each person's intellectual and moral existence.

It is impossible to estimate accurately the influence of the first instruction which a man receives: that influence depends upon the virtue of the words which instruct, and on the way they are received. It is a sort of fertilisation, the fruits of which are sometimes slow in ripening, and come forth late. As the life-giving action of instruction cannot be exercised except by words and the signs of language, the form often overlies the spirit, and many retain scarcely more than the letter or the words, which they reproduce from memory with great facility. The larger part of infantine successes and collegiate glories consist of this. Others, on the contrary, deeply smitten with the spirit of what is said, early conceive ideas of a fertile kind destined to become the parent ideas of all their future thoughts. The more impressed and absorbed their mind is interiorly, the less vivid, the less brilliant it appears exteriorly. It carries within it confusedly ideas which are too great for what contains them, and of which it cannot yet render to itself an account; and it is only afterwards, when it has capacity and time for reflection, that it knows how to recognise, turn to advantage, and bring forth to the light, the treasures buried within.

Hence two kinds of fund or of intellectual wealth, the fruit of instruction, and derived from the manner in which it has been given and received.

1. A collection of words, expressions, images, facts, superficial thoughts, common places,—things commonly received and already discussed; whatever, in a word, strikes the senses, excites the imagination, and easily impresses itself upon the memory. It is not to be denied that this intellectual baggage, however light, accumulated during many years, and arranged with a certain degree of order, may be of some service towards speaking with facility on some occasions, but then like a rhetorician; that is, composing on the instant a sort of discourse or harangue more or less elegant, wherein there may be certain happy expressions but few ideas, and which may yet afford a transient pleasure to the listener, without moving or instructing him. In many circumstances, discourses of this class are in keeping; they at

least suffice. It is a part played in a given situation, a portion of the programme performed, and it is assuredly an advantage not to be despised to acquit oneself of it with honour, or even without discredit.

2. But the real fund is in ideas, not in phrases, in the succession or connexion of the thoughts, and not in a series of facts or images. He who has laid in a store in this manner is not so ready at a speech, because there is within him a veritable thought with which his spirit strives in order to master, possess, and manifest it, so soon as he shall have thoroughly entered into it; such a man speaks not merely from memory or imagination, only and always with a labour of the understanding, and then what he produces is something with life in it and capable of inspiring life—and this is just what distinguishes the orator from the rhetorician.

The latter may charm by his language, but he imparts no life; and thus nothing is produced in the mind of the hearer. It is pleasant music which delights the ear for a moment, and leaves nothing behind it. *Vox et præterea nihil.*

The former raises up a new set of objects in the hearer's mind, producing therein feelings, affections, emotions, ideas; he renews it, transforms it, and turns it into a likeness of himself; and as the Almighty created all things by His word, so the true orator animates those who understand him by his, and makes them live with his own intellectual life. But in this, as in all things, it is only by a Divine virtue that life is transmitted. The sacred fire which warms the bosom of the orator is inspiration from on high: *pectus est quod disertum facit.* Without this life-giving fire, the finest phrases that can be put together are but sounding brass and tinkling symbols.

The fund to be amassed, therefore, by those who intend to speak in public, is a treasury of ideas, thoughts, and principles of knowledge, strongly conceived, firmly linked together, carefully wrought out, in such a way that, throughout all this diversity of study, the mind, so far as may be, shall admit nothing save what it thoroughly comprehends, or at least has made its own to a certain extent, by meditation. Thus, knowledge becomes strangely melted down, not cumbersome to the understanding;

and not overburdening the memory. It is the essence of things reduced to their simplest expression, and comprising all their concentrated virtue. It is the drop of oil extracted from thousands of roses, and fraught with their accumulated odours; the healing power of a hundred-weight of bark in a few grains of quinine. In a word, it is the idea in its intellectuality, and metaphysical purity, compared to the multiplicity of facts and images from which it has been extracted, and of which it is the law. This point is not well enough understood in our day, when material things are made paramount, and the spirit is postponed to the letter, —to such a degree indeed that even in instruction, and in spiritual or mental things, no less than in all else, quantity is considered more than quality.

Under the specious pretext of preparing men betimes for their future profession in society, and of making them what are called *special* men, their attention is directed from the tenderest age to phenomena, which occupy the senses and the imagination without exciting thought; and above all, without recalling the mind home to itself, in order to teach it self-knowledge, self-direction, and self-possession,—worth, assuredly, the knowledge or possession of everything else. Instruction is materialised to the utmost; and in the same degree education is sensualised. It is driven headlong into that path which is the acknowledged reproach of contemporary art,—not nature and truth, but naturalism and realism. People care no longer for any but positive, or, as it is styled, professional instruction,—that is, such as may directly serve to earn the bread of this world. Men are trained for the one end of turning this earth to account, and securing in it a comfortable position. It is forgotten that the true man, like thought, is an idea even more than a body or a letter, and that the body and the letter have no value except from the idea which animates him, and which he should express. The ideal is dreaded now-a-days, or rather it is not understood, it is no longer appreciated, because our views are absorbed by the real, and the pleasures of the body are more sought after than those of the mind.

For this reason the natural and physical sciences, which make matter their study, with mathematics as their handmaidens, because they measure the finite, are so much honoured in our day. In these pursuits everything is positive—matter, form, letter, number, weight, and measure; and as the end of these studies is the amelioration, or at least the embellishment of earthly life, the multitude rushes readily in this direction, and the mind becomes the servant, or rather the slave of the body.

Every science, at present, which is not directly or indirectly subservient to some material want or enjoyment,—that is, to something positive, as the saying is,—falls into contempt and opprobrium, or is at least abandoned. Philosophy furnishes a melancholy example. True, it has well deserved this fate by its excess and extravagance in recent times; and the same will invariably befall it, whenever it effects independence, and refuses fealty to Divine authority. It is the same with literature, the fine arts, and whatever promotes the civilization of men and the triumph of the Divine principle made after the image of God, over the brute formed after the image of the world. All these noble objects are abandoned as useless, or of little importance to the wants and happiness of actual society. Religion has alone survived, thanks to her unchangeable teaching and her Divine origin, which place her above human institutions and the vicissitudes of earth. But for the Rock of the Divine Word, but for the Divine foundation-stone, on which she is built, she also, under pretence of rendering her more useful or more positive, more suited to the wants and lights of the age, would have been lowered and materialised, then the last link which binds humanity to heaven would have been broken, and the spiritual man would have been wholly interred in the slough of this world, buried in sensuality. Let but one glance be given at what has been the fate of Religion and its Divine authority, in some instances and a notion will be gained of the degradation from which Religion still preserves the human race. She is the last refuge of freedom and dignity of the mind against material force. Everywhere else, religious instruction, without faith and without fixed rule, is at the mercy of human science, and therefore of the world's power, which makes that science the instrument of its own predominance.

I crave forgiveness for this disgression which has escaped from a heart deeply saddened at the lowering of our system of studies and the decline of our education, which will lead to a new species of barbarism in this age of ours.

I return to my subject, that is, to the fund which he who wishes to speak in public should form within himself; and I say to the young who may read me,—if, indeed, they will read me at all—I say, at least to those who may feel themselves impelled to the noble exercise of eloquence: "My young friends, before speaking, endeavour to know what you have to say, and for this, study—study well. Obtain by perseverance an acquaintance first with all that relates to classical learning; and then let each labour ardently in the department to which his vocation urges him. Whatever you study, do so solidly and conscientiously. Bend your whole mind to the object you seek to know, and let it not go till you have entered into, mastered, and grasped it, so as to comprehend it, to conceive it within yourselves, to possess the full idea of it, and to be able to give an account of it to yourselves and others. There is but one time for acquirement, the time of youth.

Bees gather in the flower season only; they afterwards live upon their wax and honey. In youth all the faculties are wondrously adapted to receive and retain, and the mind eagerly welcomes what comes from without. It is now that supplies should be laid in, the harvest gathered, and stored in the garner. Later comes the threshing of the sheaves, and the severing of the grain from the straw,—the grinding, the formation of pure flour, the kneading of it, and the making of bread. But there would be neither bread, nor flour, nor grain, if there had been no reaping,—and what can be reaped if the seed has not been cast, nor the ground opened and prepared? Sow, then, the field of your mind as much as possible, till it, and moisten it with your sweat, that the good seed may bear fruit, and use the sickle courageously in the heat of the day, in order to fill the storehouse of your understanding. Then when you shall have to feed a famishing people with the bread of eloquence, you will have in hand rich ears to beat, and generous grain yielding pure substance; from this substance, kneaded in your mind with a little leaven from on high, imparting to it a divine fermentation, you may form intellectual bread full of flavour and solidity, which will give your audience the nourishment of mind and soul, even as bread gives aliment to the body."

§ 2.—*To know how to speak, you must first know how to think.*

We now come to the *acquired qualities* properly so called, that is, to the art of thinking, and the method of expressing what is thought which may be learnt by study and formed by well-directed practice.

Although we think by nature, yet is there an art of thinking which teaches us to do with greater ease and certainty what our nature, as rational beings, leads us to do spontaneously. In all that man voluntarily does, liberty has its own share; and liberty, which nowhere exists without intelligence, is ever the source of progress and perfection. Man learns how to think as he learns how to speak, read, write, and sing, to move his body gracefully, and to use all the powers of mind and body.

Logic teaches the art of thinking. The orator therefore must be a good logician; not alone theoretically, but practically. It is not his business to know how to declaim about the origin and formation of ideas, nor about the four operations of thought. It is not the method of teaching, but the use of logic which he requires,—and a prompt and dexterous familiarity with it he will not acquire except by long and repeated exercises, under the guidance of an experienced thinker, an artist of thought, who will teach him how to do with ease what he knows how to do already of himself imperfectly.

We, in this point of view, somewhat regret the disuse of the old syllogistic method of the schools; for we are convinced that, properly applied and seriously directed, it gives quickness, subtilty, clearness, and something sure and firm to the mind, rarely found in the thinkers of the present day. The fault formerly, perhaps, was in the excessiveness of the dialectical turn, and frequently the style became spoilt by dryness, heaviness, and an appearance of pedantry. Still, men knew how to state a question, and how to treat it: they knew at which end to begin it in order to develope and solve it; and the line of the argument, distinctly marked out, led straight to the object and to a conclusion. The fault now-a-days is in an absence or deficiency of method. People remain a long time before their subject without knowing how to begin it, even though they rightly understand its very terms. This superinduces interminable preparations, desultory introductions, a confused exposition, a disorderly development, and finally no conclusion, or at least nothing decisive. There are really few men in our day who know how to think, that is, how to lay down and develope a subject in such a way as to instruct and interest those who read them or listen to them. A horror is everywhere felt for rules or for what imposes constraint, and, as nearly all the barriers have been removed which supported and protected human activity by obliging it to exert itself within fixed lines, liberty has become disorder, men swerve from the track in order to walk at their ease; and, far from gaining by it, they lose great part of their time and their strength in seeking a path which would have been shown them from the outset had they chosen to accept of discipline, and to allow themselves to be guided. In order to think in their own fashion, or be original, they think at random, just as ideas happen to come, if any come; and the upshot, for the most part, is vagueness, oddity, and confusion. This is the era of the vague and the almost. Everybody wants to speak of everything, as everybody wants to interfere in everything; and the result is that amidst this flood of thoughts, this overflow of divergent or irreconcilable words and actions, the minds of men, tossed to and fro, float uncertain, without a notion where they are going, just as the wind blows or the current drives.

I would have, then, persons who are intended for public speaking, follow a course of logic, rather practical than theoretic, in which the mind should be vigorously trained to the division and combination of ideas upon interesting and instructive topics. These exercises should be written or oral. Sometimes it should be a dissertation on a point of literature, morals, or history; and a habit should be acquired of composing with order and method, by pointing out, in proportion as the student proceeded, the several parts of the discourse, the steps of the development, and means of proof—in a word, whatever serves to treat a subject suitably. Sometimes it should be a discussion between several debaters, with the whole apparatus and strict rules of a dialectic argument, under the master's direction; the disputants should not be allowed to proceed or conclude without reducing their thoughts to the forms of syllogistic reasoning,—a process which entails some lengthiness, and even heaviness upon the discourse, but it gives greater clearness, order, and certainty. At other times, the debate might be extemporaneous, and then, in the unforeseen character of the discussion and in all the sparks of intelligence which it strikes forth, will be seen the minds which are distinguished, the minds that know how to take possession of an idea at once, enter into it, divide, and expound it. There should, for every position or thesis, be the counter-position or antithesis, and some one to maintain it; for in every subject there are reasons for and against. Thus would the student learn to look at things in various lights, and not to allow himself to be absorbed by one point of view, or by a preconceived opinion. But these gymnastics of thinking ought to be led by an intelligent master, who suffers not himself to be swayed by forms or enslaved by routine. Real thinking must be effected under all these forms of disputation and argument, but the letter must not kill the spirit, as frequently was the case in the schools of antiquity. For then it would no longer be anything but an affair of memory, and the life of intelligence would die away. I am convinced,—and I have made the experiment for a length of years in the Faculty of Strasbourg, where I had established those exercises, which proved exceedingly useful,—I am convinced that young men, who thus occupied themselves during a year or two in turning over and handling a variety of questions, in stirring up a multiplicity of ideas, and who should, with a view to this, write and speak a great deal, always with order, with method, and under good guidance, would become able thinkers; and, if endowed with high intelligence, would become men mighty in word or in deed, or in both together, according to their capacity, character and nature.

§ 3.—*That Good Speaking may be learnt, and how.*

However, it is not enough to think methodically, in order to speak well, although this be a great step towards it; to express or say what is thought is also necessary; in other words, form must be added to the substance.

We must learn then how to speak as well as how to think well.

Here, again, practice surpasses theory, and daily exercise is worth more than precepts. Rhetoric teaches the art of language; that is, of speaking or writing elegantly, while grammar shows how to do so with correctness. It is clear that before anything else, the rules of language must be known and observed; but correctness gives neither elegance nor grace, which are the most requisite qualities of the orator. How are they then to be acquired?

In the first place there is what cannot be acquired—a natural fund, which nature alone can give. Women are remarkable for it. The gracefulness with which nature has endowed them, diffuses itself generally into their language; and some speak, and even write, admirably, without any study; under the sole inspiration of feeling or passion. Credit, indeed, must be given to the medium in which they are placed, and the society in which they live, constituting a moral atmosphere in which their very impressionable and open minds—unless wilfully closed—absorb all influences with avidity, and receive a kind of spontaneous culture and education. As plants, which bear in their germs the hidden treasures of the most brilliant and odoriferous flowers, inhale from the ground where they are fixed, and the air which encompasses them, the coarsest juices and the subtilest fluids, which they marvellously transform by assimilation; so these delicate souls absorb into themselves all they come in contact with, all that impresses or nourishes them; which they manifest by a soft radiation, by a graceful efflorescence in their movements, actions, words, and whatever emanates from their persons.

Women naturally speak better than men. They express themselves more easily, more vividly; with more arch simplicity, because they feel more rapidly and more delicately. Hence the loquacity with which they are reproached, and which is an effect of their constitution and temperament. Hence there are so many women who write in an admirable and remarkable manner, although they have studied neither rhetoric nor logic, and even without knowing grammar or orthography. They write as they speak; they speak pretty much as the birds sing,—and their language has the same charm. Add to this the sweetness of their organ, the flexibility of their voice, the variety of their intonations, according to the feeling which animates them; the mobility of their physiognomy, which greatly increases the effect of words, the picturesqueness of their gestures, and in short the gracefulness of their whole exterior: thus, although not destined for orators by their sex or social position, they have all the power of the orator, and all his success, in their sphere, and in the circle of their activity. For none better know how to touch, persuade, and influence, which, I think, is the end and the perfection of eloquence.

Men, then, who wish to acquire the art of speaking, must learn by study what most women do naturally; and in this respect those whose temperament most approaches the feminine, in greater sensibility, and livelier impressionableness, will have less difficulty than others, and will succeed better.

However, as the man who speaks in public has to express loftier ideas, general notions, and deeper or more extensive combinations, which imply depth,—penetration of mind, and reflective power,—qualities very scarce among women,—he will never be able to expound these subjects, the result of abstraction and meditation, with grace of feeling and easiness of language spontaneously, and by nature. Here art must supply what nature refuses; by diligent labor, by exercises multiplied without end, the diction must be rendered pliable, the speech disciplined, and broken in, that it may become an amenable instrument which, obedient to the least touch of the will, and lightest challenge of thought, will furnish instantly a copious style, seeming to flow spontaneously, the result nevertheless of the subtilest art; like fountains which, with great cost and magnificence, carry the waters of our rivers into our squares, yet appear to pour forth naturally. Thus the words of the orator, by dint of toil and of art, and this even on the most abstract subjects, ought to attain a limpid and an easy flow, with which he hardly troubles himself, but to which his attention is all the time directed, in order to bring to light the ideas in his mind, the images in his fancy, and the emotions of his heart.

Such is the talent to be acquired! *Fit fabricando faber*, says the adage; and it is the same with the journeyman of words, and forger of eloquence. The iron must be often beaten, especially while it is hot, to give it shape; so must we continually hammer language to become masters of it, and to fashion it, if we would become cabable of speaking in public. It is not enough to learn the rules of style, the tropes and figures of rhetoric; the use and proper application of them must be known; and this cannot be learnt except by much speaking and much writing under the direction of an able master, who knows how to write and speak himself; for in this both precept and example are necessary, and example is better than precept.

He who has a capacity for public speaking will learn it best by listening to those who know how to speak well, and he will make more progress by striving to imitate them than by all their instructions: as the young birds, on their first attempts to quit the parent nest, try at first their unskilful flight in the track of their parents, guided and sustained by their wings, and venture not except with eyes fixed on them, so a youth who is learning how to become a writer, follows his master with confidence while imitating him, and in his first essays cleaves timidly at his heels, daring in the beginning to go only where he is led, but every day tries to proceed a little farther, drawn on, and, as it were, carried by his guide. It is a great blessing to have an able man for a master. It is worth more than all books; for it is a living book, imparting life at the same moment as instruction. It is one torch kindling another. Then an inestimable advantage is gained, for, to the authority of the master, which youth is always more or less prone to dispute, is added the authority of talent which invariably prevails. He gladly receives the advice and guidance of the man whose superiority he recognises. This much is needed to quell the pride of youth, and cast down, or at least abate, its presumption and self-confidence. It willingly listens to the master it admires, and feels happy in his society.

I had this happiness, and I have always been deeply grateful to the Almighty who procured it for me, and to the illustrious man who was the instrument of His beneficence. For nearly four years, at the Lyceum of Charlemagne and the Ecole Normale, I profited daily by the lessons and example of Monsieur VILLEMAIN, then almost as young as his pupils; and, if I know anything of the art of speaking and writing, I say it before the world, to him, after God, I owe it.

§ 4.—*That to speak well in public, one must first know how to write.*

You will never be capable of speaking properly in public, unless you acquire such mastery of your own thought as to be able to decompose it into its parts, to analyse it into its elements, and then at need, to recompose, regather, and concentrate it again by a synthetical process. Now this analysis of the idea, which displays it, as it were, before the eyes of the mind, is well executed only by writing. The pen is the scalpel which dissects the thoughts, and never, except when you write down what you behold internally, can you succeed in clearly discerning all that is contained in a conception, or in obtaining its well-marked scope. You then understand yourself, and make others understand you.

You should therefore begin by learning to write, in order to give yourself a right account of your own thoughts, before you venture yourself to speak. They who have not learned this first, speak in general badly and with difficulty; unless, indeed, they have that fatal facility, a thousand times worse than hesitation or than silence, which drowns thought in floods of words, or in a torrent of copiousness, sweeping away good earth, and leaving behind sand and stones alone. Heaven keep us from those interminable talkers, such as are often to be found in southern countries, who deluge you, relatively to anything and to nothing, with a shower of dissertation and a downpouring of their eloquence! During nine-tenths of the time there is not one rational thought in the whole of this twaddle, carrying along in its course every kind of rubbish and platitude. The class of persons who produce a speech so easily, and who are ready at the shortest moment to extemporise a speech, a dissertation, or a homily, know not how to compose a tolerable sentence; and I repeat that, with such exceptions as defy all rule, he who has not learnt how to write will never know how to speak.

To learn to write, one must write a great deal in imitation of those who know how, and under their guidance, just as one learns to draw or paint from good models, and by means of wise instruction. It is a school process, or a workshop process, if the phrase be preferred, and to a great extent mechanical and literal, but indispensable to the student of letters. Thus the musician must tutor his fingers to pliancy, in order to execute easily and instantaneously all the movements necessary for the quick production of sounds, depending on the structure of his instrument. Thus, likewise, the singer must become master of all the movements of his throat, and must long and unremittingly practise vocal exercises, until the will experiences no difficulty in determining those contractions and expansions of the windpipe which modify and inflect the voice in every degree and fraction of its scale.

In the same manner, the future orator must, by long study and repeated compositions of a finished kind, handle and turn all expressions of language, various constructions of sentences, and endless combinations of words, until they have become supple and well-trained instruments of the mind, giving him no longer any trouble while actually speaking, and accommodating themselves unresistingly to the slightest guidance of his thought.

With inverted languages, in which the sentence may assume several arrangements, this is more easy, for you have more than one way to express the same thought; and thus there are more chances of expressing yourself, if not better, at least more conveniently. But in our language,* whose principal merit is clearness, and whose path is always the straightest, that is, the most logical possible,—a quality which constitutes its value, for, after all, speech is made to convey our thoughts,—it is more difficult to speak well, and especially to extemporise, because there is but one manner of constructing the sentence, and if you have the misfortune of missing, at the outset, this direct and single way, you are involved in a by-path without any outlets, and can emerge from it only by breaking through the enclosures or escaping across country. You are then astray, or lost in a quicksand,—a painful result for all concerned, both for him who speaks, and for those who listen.

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* The English language holds, in this respect, a middle place between the French and the two great all-capable tongues of classic antiquity.

It is therefore indispensable to acquire the perfect mastery of your instrument, if you wish so to play upon it in public as to give pleasure to others, and avoid bringing confusion upon yourself. As the violinist commands with the touch every part of the string, and his fingers alight on the exact point in order to produce the required sound, so the mind of the orator ought to alight precisely on the right word, corresponding to each part of the thought, and to seize on the most suitable arrangement of words, in order to exhibit the development of its parts with due regard to each sentence as well as to the whole discourse. An admirable and prodigious task in the quickness and certitude of the discernment is executed at the moment of extemporising, and in the taste and the tact which it implies. And here especially are manifested the truth and use of our old literary studies and of the method which, up to our own day, has been constantly employed, but now apparently despised, or neglected, to the great injury of logic and eloquence.

The end of that method is to stimulate and bring out the intelligence of youth by the incessant decomposition and recomposition of speech,—in other words, by the continual exercise of both analysis and synthesis; and that the exercise in question may be the more closely reasoned and more profitable, it is based simultaneously on two languages studied together, the one ancient and dead, and not therefore to be learnt by rote, the other living and as analogous as possible to the first. The student is then made to account to himself for all the words of both, and for their bearings in particular sentences, in order to establish the closest parallel between them, the most exact equiponderance, and so to reproduce with all attainable fidelity the idea of one language in the other. Hence what are termed themes and versions,—the despair of idle school-boys, indeed, but very serviceable in forming and perfecting the natural logic of the mind, which, if carefully pursued for several years is the best way of teaching the unpractised and tender reason of youth all the operations of thought,—a faculty which, after all, keeps pace with words, and can work and manifest itself only by means of the signs of language.

The superficial or positive philosopher imagines that the object of this protracted trial, which occupies the finest years of youth, is to learn Latin or Greek, and then exclaims that the result is not worth either the trouble or the time which it costs, and that, comparing one language with another, it would be more profitable to teach children modern and spoken tongues which might hereafter be of use to them in life. Such persons would be quite right if this were the only end in view; for doubtless, French or German would be more serviceable for travel, trade, or anything of that nature.

But there is another object which these persons do not see, although it is the main object: which is to teach thinking to individuals who are destined to work in social life by their thought,—to fashion labourers of the mind to the functions of intelligence, as an apprentice or handicraftsman is fashioned to material functions and bodily toil. As these last are taught to use their tools, and therefore to know them thoroughly and handle them skilfully, in like manner the former must also learn perfectly the implements of their calling, and tools of their craft, in order to use them ably on all possible occasions. Now the necessary instrument,—thought's indispensable tool,—is language; and therefore, although people speak naturally and almost without any teaching, merely through living together, yet if a person wish to become an able workman of speech, and consequently of thought, as if he sought to be an able locksmith or a skilful mason, he must get instruction in the processes of art, and be initiated in the rules and methods which make it easier and more efficient.

This is obtained by the study of languages which is the object of classical pursuits. From the elementary class to the "humanities," it is one course of logic by means of comparative grammar,—and it is the only logic of which youth is capable. It is the easiest training of thought by and through words, its material signs. A youth is thus taught for several years to learn the connexions of ideas by the relations of words, which he is continually fashioning and re-fashioning; and while learning to form sentences, ever with a thought in view, the details of which he must explain and convey, he becomes used to analysis and combination, and executes, in the humble functions of grammar, a prelude to the highest operations of science, which, after all, are but the decomposition and marshalling of ideas.

Who does not at once see what facility the mind acquires by this perpetual comparison of the terms and idioms of two languages, which must be made to fit each other, and to what a degree thought becomes refined and subtile, in the presence of some idea which has to be expressed? the phrases of two languages are measured and weighed incessantly; they are compared, each with each, and each with the idea, to ascertain which will render it best.

The efforts are not useless which are made by these youthful minds who thus, day after day, wrestle with the thoughts of the most illustrious writers of antiquity, in order to understand and translate them. How great a privilege to commune daily with the exalted reason, the noble ideas, and the splendid diction of those great and noble minds! How great the advantage derived from such an intercourse, and how great the intellectual gain in such a company, and daily familiarity! Then what a pleasure to have found an equivalent term, and to have transferred into one's own language, with the same vigour or the same delicacy, what some famous author has said in his! What profit in this concussion of idioms, from which the spark of ideas is so often striken forth,—this strife, unequal indeed, yet replete with a noble emulation, between a youth, trying the nascent strength of his thoughts, and some master mind whose works enlighten and guide humanity! And finally, what more particularly concerns our subject, what facility of expression, what aptitude for extemporaneous speaking, must not accrue from this habit, contracted from childhood, of handling and turning a sentence in every direction, until the most perfect form be found, of combining its terms in all ways, in order to arrive at the arrangement best fitted for the manifestation of the thought, of polishing each member of it by effacing asperities and smoothing crevices, of balancing one sentence against another, in order to give the whole oneness, measure, harmony, and a sort of music, rendering it as agreeable to the ear when spoken, as it is luminous to the mind by which it is meditated.

No; in no other way can the artist of words be ever formed; and if a different method be attempted, as is somewhat signified at present, you will have, not artists, but handicraftsmen. Means should always be proportioned to ends. If you want orators, you must teach them how to speak, and you will not teach them otherwise than they have been taught heretofore. All our (French) great orators of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been formed in this manner, and I am not aware that there have ever been greater writers in the world, or that the glory of France in this particular has been excelled. Let this splendour of civilisation, this blooming forth of the mind in poetry, literature, and eloquence, which have always been the brightest crown and most beautiful garland of humanity on earth, be once abandoned, in favour of conquest, and of the riches produced by industry and commerce,—which are much to be admired, no doubt, but, after all, minister more to body than to soul, —be it so; we shall perhaps become more learned in material things, and certainly more wealthy; we shall have more ways of winning money and of losing it, more ways of enjoying earthly life, and therefore of wearing out, and perchance of degrading it: but shall we be the happier? This is not certain. Shall we be the better?—less certain still; but what is certain, is, that the life of human society or civilization, however gilt, will be less beautiful, less noble, and less glorious.

There is another practice which strikingly conduces towards facilitating expression and towards perfecting its form; we mean the learning by heart of the finest passages in great writers, and especially in the most musical poets, so as to be able to recite them at a single effort, at moments of leisure, during a solitary walk for instance, when the mind so readily wanders. This practice, adopted in all schools, is particularly advantageous in rhetoric, and during the bright years of youth. At that age it is easy and agreeable, and he who aspires to the art of speaking ought never to neglect it. Besides furnishing the mind with all manner of fine thoughts, well expressed and well linked together, and thus nourishing, developing, and enriching it, it has the additional advantage of filling the understanding with graceful images, of forming the ear to the rhythm and number of the period, and of obtaining a sense of the harmony of speech, which is not without its own kind of music; for ideas, and even such as are the most abstract, enter the mind more readily, and sink into it more deeply, when presented in a pleasing fashion. By dint of reading the beautiful lines of Corneille and Racine, Bossuet's majestic and pregnant sentences, the harmonious and cadenced compositions of Fénélon and Massillon, one gradually and without effort acquires a language approaching theirs, and imitates them instinctively through the natural attraction of the beautiful, and the propensity to reproduce whatever pleases; and at last, by repeating this exercise daily for years, one attains a refined taste of the delicacies of language and the shades of style, just as a palate accustomed to the flavour of the most exquisite viands can no longer endure the coarser. But what is only a disadvantage in bodily taste, at least under certain circumstances, is always beneficial to the literary taste, which should seek its nutriment, like the bee, in the most aromatic portions of the flower, in order to combine them into delicious and perfumed honey.

By this process is prepared, moreover, in the imaginative part of the understanding, a sort of capacity for the oratorical form, for the shaping of sentences, which I cannot liken to anything better than to a mould carefully prepared, and traced with delicate lines and varied patterns, into which the stream of thought, flowing full of life and ardour from a glowing mind in the fire of declamation or composition, becomes fixed even while it is being cast, as metal in a state of fusion becomes instantaneously a beautiful statue. Thus the oratorical diction should be cast, all of one piece, by a single throw in order to exhibit a beautiful and a living unity. But for this a beautiful mould is indispensable, and the young orator, who must have further re-

received from nature the artistic power, cannot form within him that mould save with the assistance of the great masters and by imitating them. Genius alone is an exception to this rule, and genius is rare.

The best rhetorical professors, those who are veritably artists of speech, and seek to fashion others to their own likeness, recommend and adopt this exercise largely; it is irksome to the indolent, but it amply indemnifies the toil which it exacts by the fruits which it brings. There is, besides, a way of alleviating the trouble of it, and that is, to read and learn select pages of our great authors, while strolling under the shades of a garden or through some rich country, when nature is in all her brilliancy. You may then recite them aloud in such beautiful scenery, the impressions of which deliciously blend with those of eloquence and song. Every young man of any talent or literary taste has made the experiment. During the spring time of life, there is a singular charm for us in the spring time of nature; and the redundance of fresh life in a youthful soul trying its own powers in thought, in painting, or in poesy, is marvellously and instinctively wooed into sympathy with that glorious life of the world around, whose fertilising virtue evokes his genius, while it enchants his senses by the subtilest emotions, and enriches his imagination with varied pictures and brilliant hues.

Moreover,—and this is a privilege of youth, which has its advantages as well as its inconveniences,—poetry and eloquence are never better relished, that is, never with greater delight and love, than at this age, in the dawn of the soul's life, amidst the first fruits of the imagination and the heart's innocence, in the opening splendours of the ideal, which seems to the understanding as a rising sun, tinging and illumining all things with its radiant fires. The beauty that is understood and that which is merely sensible wondrously harmonise, they give each other enchantment and relief; or, to speak more truly, material beauty is appreciated only through the reflected light of mental beauty, and as the rays emitted by an idea illuminate and transfigure nature's forms and nature's life,—so nature, on the other hand, while it lovingly receives the lustre of some heavenly thought, refracts it gloriously in its prisms, and multiplies, while reflecting its beams.

All this the youthful orator, or he who has the power to become one, will feel and experience, each person according to his nature and his character, as he awakens the echoes of some beautiful scene with the finest accents of human eloquence or poetry. While impressing these more deeply in his memory, by help of the spots wherein he learns them, which will add to and thereafter facilitate his recollections, he will imbibe unconsciously a twofold life, the purest and sublimest life of humanity, and that great life of nature which is the thought of the Almighty diffused throughout creation. These two great lives, that of man and that of nature, which spring from the same source, and thither return, blended without being confounded within him, animating and nourishing his own life, the life of his mind and of his soul, will yet draw forth from his bosom, from his poet's or orator's heart, a stream of eloquence or of song which will run an imperishable course.

CHAP. IV.

PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE ORATOR, NATURAL AND ACQUIRED.

It is not enough for the orator to have ideas and to know how to express them, imparting the most graceful turn to his diction, and pouring forth copious words into the form of a musical and sonorous period; he must further know how to articulate his speech, how to pronounce and deliver his discourse. He must have propriety of voice and gesture, or the oratorical action,—a thing of immense importance to the success of eloquence, in which nature, as in everything, has a considerable share, but art may play a great part. Here, then, also is to be developed a natural predisposition, and a certain skill is to be acquired.

§ 1.—*The Voice.*

The voice, including all the organs which serve to produce or modify it, is the speaker's chief instrument; and its quality essentially depends, in the first instance, upon the formation of the chest, the throat, and mouth. Art can do little to ameliorate this formation, but it can do much to facilitate and strengthen the organic movements in all that regards breathing, the emission of sound, and pronunciation. These matters ought to be the object of a special duty.

It is very important, in speaking as in singing, to know how to send forth and how to husband the breath, so as to spin lengthened sounds and deliver a complete period, without being blown, and without breaking a sentence already begun, or a rush of declamation by a gasp,—needful, indeed, for lungs that have failed, but making a sórt of disagreeable gap or stoppage.

Care should also be taken not to speak too fast, too loud, or with too much animation at the outset; for if you force your voice in the beginning you are presently out of breath, or your voice is cracked or hoarse, and then you can no longer proceed without repeated efforts which fatigue the hearers and exhaust the speaker. All these precautions, which appear trivial, but which are really of high importance, are learned by labour, practice, and personal experience. Still it is a very good thing to be warned and guided by the experience of others, and this may be ensured advantageously by frequent recitations aloud under the direction of some master of elocution.

Enough stress is not laid on these things, if, indeed, they are attended to at all, in the schools of rhetoric, in literary establishments, and in seminaries,—wherein orators, nevertheless, are expected to be formed. Scarce any but actors now-a-days trouble themselves about them, and that is the reason we have so few men in the liberal professions who know how to speak, or even to read or recite a discourse rightly.

On this point the ancients had a great advantage over us; they attached far more importance than we do to oratorical action, as we see in the treatises of Cicero and Quintilian. It was with them one half of eloquence at the least; and it is said that Demosthenes made it the orator's chief quality. They, perhaps, went too far in this respect; and it came, doubtless, of their having to speak before the multitude, whose senses must be struck, whose passions must be excited, and on whom power and brilliancy of voice have immense effect. As for us, we fall into the contrary extreme, and frequently our orators, even those most distinguished in point of style, do not know how to speak their speeches. We are so unused to beauty of form and nobility of air, that we are amazed when we meet them. There is a certain orator of our day who owes his success and reputation merely to these advantages. On the other hand, these alone are too little; we miss much when a fine elocution and an elegant or splendid delivery, carry off commonplace thoughts and expressions, more full of sound than of sense. This is quickly perceived in the perusal of those harangues which produced so great an effect when delivered, and in which scarcely any of the emotions experienced in listening to them is recovered after they have once been fixed warm, as it were, on paper by the reporter's art. The spell of the oratorical action is gone from them.

The modulation of the voice proceeds principally from the larynx, which produces and modifies it almost without limit, by expansion and contraction. First, then, we have the formation of the larynx, with its muscles, cartilages, membranes, and tracery, which are to the emission of vocal sound what the involutions of the brain probably are, *instrumentally*, in the operations of thought. But, in the one case as in the other, the connexion of the organs with the effects produced entirely escapes us; and although we are continually availing ourselves of the instrument, we do not perceive in any manner the *how* of its ministrations. It is only by use, and experiments often repeated, that we learn to employ them with greater ease and power, and our skill in this respect is wholly empirical. The researches of the subtilest anatomy have given us no discovery in the matter. All that we have ascertained is, that every voice has its natural bell-tone, which makes it a bass voice, a tenor, or a soprano, each with intermediate gradations. The middle voice, or tenor, is the most favourable for speaking; it is that which maintains itself the best, and which reaches the farthest when well articulated. It is also the most pleasing, the most endearing, and has the largest resources for inflection, because, being in the middle of the scale, it rises or sinks with greater ease, and leans itself better to either hand. It therefore commands a greater variety of intonations, which hinders monotony of elocution, and reawakens the attention of the hearer, so prone to doze.

The upper voice, exceedingly clear at first, is continually tending towards a scream. It harshens as it proceeds, and at last becomes falsetto and nasal. It requires great talent, great liveliness of thought, language, and elocution to compensate or redeem this blemish. One of the most distinguished orators of our time is an example in point. He used to succeed in obtaining a hearing for several hours together, in spite of his lank and creaking voice, —a real victory of mind over matter.

A bass voice is with difficulty pitched high, and continually tends back. Grave and majestic at the outset, it soon grows heavy and monotonous; it has magnificent chords, but, if long listened to, produces frequently the effect of a drone, and soon tires and lulls to sleep by the medley of commingling sounds. What, then, if it be coarse, violent, uttered with bursts? Why, it crushes the ear, if it thunders in too confined an apartment; and if it breaks forth amidst some vast nave, where echoes almost always exist, the billows of sound reverberating from every side, blend together, should the orator be speaking fast, and the result is a deafening confusion, and a sort of acoustic chaos.

It is an advantage, then, to a speaker to have a middle voice, since he has the greater play for expression in its more numerous inflections. It is easy to understand how, by constant practice, by frequent and intelligent recitations under able guidance, a person may become master of these inflections, may produce them at will, and raise and lower his voice in speaking as in singing, either gradually or abruptly, from tone to tone, up to the very highest, according to the feeling, the thought, or the emotions of the mind. Between the acts of the mental life and those of the organs which are subservient to them there is a natural correspondence and an inborn analogy, by virtue of the human constitution, which consists of a soul in union with a body; and, for this reason, all the impressions, agitations, shudderings, and throbbings of the heart, when it is stirred by the affections and the passions, no less than the subtilest acts, the nimblest operations of the intelligence—in a word, all the modifications of the moral life should find a tone, an accent in the voice, as well as a sign in language, an accord, a parallel, in the physical life, and in its means of expression.

In all cases, whatever be the tone of the voice, bass, tenor, or soprano,—what most wins upon the hearers, what best seizes and most easily retains their attention, is what may be called *a sympathetic voice.* It is difficult enough to say in what it consists; but what very clearly characterises it, is the gift of causing itself to be attended to. It is a certain power of attraction which draws to it the hearer's mind, and on its accents hangs his attention. It is a secret virtue which is in speech, and which penetrates at once, or little by little, through the ear to the mind or into the heart of those who listen, charms them, and holds them beneath the charm, to such a degree that they are disposed, not only to listen, but even to admit what is said, and to receive it with confidence. It is a voice which inspires an affection for him who speaks, and puts you instinctively on his side, so that his words find an echo in the mind, repeating there what he says, and reproducing it easily in the understanding and the heart.

A sympathetic voice singularly helps the effect of the discourse, and is, besides, the best, the most insinuating of exordiums (introductions). I know an orator who has, among other qualities, this in his favour, and who, every time he mounts the pulpit, produces invariably a profound sensation by his apostolic countenance, and by the very first sounds of his voice.

Whence comes, above all others, this quality which can hardly be acquired by art? First, certainly from the natural constitution of the vocal organ, as in singing; but, next to this, the soul may contribute much towards it by the feelings and thoughts which actuate it, and by the efforts which it makes to express what is felt, and to convey it to others. There is something sympathetic in the lively and sincere manifestation of any affection; and when the hearer sees that the speaker is really moved, the motion gains him by a sort of contagion, and he begins to feel with him and like him; as two chords vibrating in unison. Or, again, if a truth be unfolded to him with clearness, in good order, and fervently, and if the speaker shows that he understands or feels what he says, the hearer, all at once enlightened and sharing in the same light, acquiesces willingly, and receives the words addressed to him with pleasure. In such cases the power of conviction animates, enlivens, and transfigures the voice, rendering it agreeable and effective by virtue of the expression, just as a lofty soul or a great mind exalts and embellishes an ordinary and even an ugly countenance.

The best way in which an orator can impart to his voice the sympathetic power, even when he may happen not to have it naturally, is to express vividly whatever he says, and consequently to feel it well himself, in order to make others feel it. Above all, the way is, to have great benevolence, great charity in the heart, and to love to put them in practice, for nothing gives more of sympathy to the voice than real goodness.

Here the precepts of art are useless. We cannot teach emotion, nor quick feelings, nor the habit of throwing ardour and transport into word and action; it is the *pectus* (heart) which accomplishes all this, and it is the *pectus* also which makes the orator—*Pectus est quod disertum facit.* For which reason, while we admit the great efficacy of art and precept in rendering the voice supple, in disciplining it, in making it obedient, ready, capable of traversing all the degrees of inflexion, and producing each tone; and while we recommend those who desire to speak in public to devote themselves to this preliminary study for the formation of their instrument, like some skilful singer or practised actor, we must still remind them that the best prepared instrument remains powerless and dead unless there be a soul to animate it; and that even without any culture, without preparation, without this gymnastic process, or this training of the vocal organs, whoever is impelled to speak by feeling, by passion, or by conviction, will find spontaneously the tone, the inflexions, and all the modifications of voice which can best correspond with what he wishes to express. Art is useful chiefly to reciters, speakers from memory, and actors, and thus, it is not to be denied, much effect may also be produced by the illusion of the natural. Still, it is after all an illusion only, a semblance of nature, and thus a thing of artifice; and nature itself will always be superior to it.

For the same reason an extemporised address, if it be such as it ought to be, is more effective, and more impressive, than a recited discourse. It smacks less of art, and the voice vibrating and responsive to what the speaker feels at the moment, finds naturally the tone most proper, the true inflexions, and genuine expression.

§ 2.—*Utterance.*

Utterance is a very important condition of being audible, and consequently of being attended to. It determines the voice, or the vowel, by the modification which this last receives from the consonant; it produces syllables, and by joining them together, gives the words, the series of which forms what is termed articulate language. Man being organised for speech speaks naturally the language he hears, and as he hears it. His instinctive and original pronunciation depends on the formation of the vocal organs, and on the manner in which those around him pronounce. Therefore, nature discharges here the chief function, but art may also exert a certain power either to correct or abate organic defects or vicious habits, or to develope and perfect favourable aptitudes. Demosthenes, the greatest orator of antiquity, whose very name continues to be the symbol of eloquence, is a remarkable case in point. Everybody is aware that by nature he had a difficulty of utterance almost amounting to a stammer, which he succeeded in overcoming by frequently declaiming on the sea-shore with pebbles in his mouth. The pebbles obliged him to redouble his exertions to subdue the rebellious organ, and the noise of the surge, obliging him to speak more loudly and more distinctly in order to hear his own words, accustomed him to the still more deafening uproar of the people's mighty voice in the market-place.

Professors of elocution lay great stress on the manner of utterance, and they are right. To form and "break" the organs to a distinct and agreeable utterance, much practice is requisite, under able tuition, and such as affords an example of what it inculcates.

First, there is the emission of the voice,—which the practitioner should know how to raise and lower through every degree within its range,—and in each degree to increase or diminish, heighten or soften its power according to circumstances, but always so as to produce no sound that is false or disagreeable to the ear.

Then comes articulation, which should be neat, clear, sharply cut,—yet unexaggerated, or else it will become heavy, harsh, and hammer-like, rending the ear.

Next to this the prosody of the language must be observed, giving its longs and its shorts; as in singing, the minims, semibreves, quavers, and crotchets. This imparts to the sentence variety, movement, and measure. A written or spoken sentence admits, indeed, strictly of notation as well as a bar of music; and when this notation is followed by the voice of the speaker, naturally or artificially, the discourse gains in expression and pleasantness.

Moreover there is accentuation, or emphasis, which marks the paramount tone of each sentence, and even in each word, the syllable on which the chief stress should be laid. Art may here effect somewhat, especially in the enunciation of words; but as regards the emphasis of the sentence, it is impressed principally by the palpitation of the soul, thrilling with desire, feeling, or conviction.

Finally, there is the declamatory movement, which, like the measure in music, should adapt itself to what is to be conveyed, now grave and solemn, now light, rapid, with a guiding rein, slackening or urging the pace, becoming nervous or gentle, according to the occasion; bursting forth at times with the vehemence of a torrent, and at times flowing gently with the clearness of a stream, or even trickling, drop by drop, like water noiselessly filtered; which, at last, fills the vessel that receives it, or wears out the stone on which it falls.

In vocal speech, as in vocal music, there are an infinitude of gradations; and the orator should have the feeling, the instinct, or the acquired habit of all these effects; and this implies in him a special taste and tact which art may develope, but can never implant. And thus there is need of caution here, as in many other cases, not to spoil nature by science, while endeavouring to perfect her. School precepts may teach a manner, a certain mechanical skill in elocution, but can never impart the sacred fire which makes speech live, nor those animated, delicate, just feelings of an excited or impassioned soul, and of a mind convinced, which grasps on the instant the peculiarity of expression and of voice which are most appropriate.

In general the masters of elocution and enunciation somewhat resemble M. Jourdain's professor of philosophy, who shows him how to do with difficulty, and badly, what he used to do naturally and well. We all speak prose, and not the worst prose, from the outset. It is pretty nearly the same with the enunciation of a discourse; and with the utterance, the accentuation, and the management of speech. The best guides in these matters, the implied predispositions, are nature and the inspiration of the moment; while example is the most profitable kind of teaching. He who has a turn for eloquence will learn how to speak by hearing good speaking. It is orators who principally form orators.

§ 3.—*Oratorical Action.*

Under this title are particularly comprised the movements of the countenance, the carriage and postures of the body, and above all gesticulation;—three things which naturally accompany speech, and in an extraordinary degree augment its expressiveness. Here, again, nature achieves a great deal; but art also assists, especially in the management of the body, and in gesticulation.

An idea may be derived of what the countenance of the speaker adds to his address from the instinctive want we experience of beholding him, even when he is already sufficiently audible. Not only all ears, but all eyes likewise are bent upon the speaker. The fact is that man's face, and, above all, his eye, is the mirror of his soul; also, in the lightning of the glance, there is a flush of lustre which illumines what is said; and on this account it was unspeakably to be regretted that Bourdaloue should have spoken with his eyes closed. One of the disadvantages of a recited speech is to quench, or at least to enfeeble and dim the brilliancy of the discourse.

Besides which the rapid contractions and dilatations of the facial muscles,—which are each moment changing and renewing the physiognomy, by forming upon the visage a sort of picture, analogous to the speaker's feeling, or to his thought,—these signs of dismay or joy, of fear or hope, of affliction of heart or of calmness, of storm or serenity, all these causes which successively plough and agitate the countenance, like a sea shaken by the winds, and which impart so much movement and life to the physiognomy that it becomes like a second discourse which doubles the force of the first,—ought to be employed by the orator as so many means of effect, mighty with the crowd whom they strike and carry away. But it is under nature's dictate that he will best employ them; and the best, the only method which it behoves him to follow in this respect, is to grasp powerfully, and to conceive thoroughly, what he has to unfold or to describe; and then to say it with all the sincerity and all the fervour of conviction or emotion. The face will play its own part spontaneously; for, as the various movements of the countenance are produced of their own accord in the ratio of the feeling experienced, whenever you are really moved and under the influence of passion, the face naturally adapts the emotion of the words, as these that of the mind; and art can be of little avail under these circumstances.

Let us, in truth, not forget that the orator is not an actor, who plays a fictitious character by putting himself in another's position. He must, by dint of art, enter into the situation which he represents, and thus he has no means of becoming impressed or moved except by the study of his model, and the meditation of his part. He must, accordingly, compose his voice as well as his countenance, and it requires great cleverness and long habit to imitate by the inflexions of the voice, and the play of the physiognomy, the true and spontaneous feeling of nature. The actor, in a word, is obliged to grimace morally as well as physically; and on this account, even when most successful, when most seeming to feel what he impersonates, as he in general feels it not, something of this is perceptible; and it is the most consummate actor's fate, that, through a certain illusion of the imagination, his acting is never more than a grimace. Hence the vice, and hence the disfavour of that profession, notwithstanding all the talent and study which it requires; there is always something disingenuous in saying what you do not think, in manifesting sentiments which are not your own.

The orator, on the contrary, unless he chooses to become the advocate of falsehood, is always with the truth. He must feel and think whatever he says, and consequently he may allow his face and his eyes to speak for themselves. As soon as his soul is moved, and becomes fervid, it will find immediate expression in his countenance and in his whole person, and the more natural and spontaneous is the play of his physiognomy, the more effect it will produce. It is not the same, or not to the same degree, with regard to the movements of the body and to gesticulation. The body, indeed, and limbs of the speaker, animated by a soul expressing itself fervidly, will represent naturally to a certain degree, by their outward movements the inward movements of the mind. But the machinery, if I may say so, is more complicated, heavier, and more cumbersome, because matter predominates here; it is not easy to move without awkwardness and elegantly the whole bulk of the body, and particularly the arms, which are the most mobile organs, and those most in sight. How many have a tolerably good notion of speaking, and cannot move their arms and hands properly, or have postures of head and attitudes which are at once ungraceful and at variance with their words. It is in this department of action that speakers most betray their inexperience and embarrassment; and, at the same time, the clumsiness or inappropriateness of the gestures; the puerility or affectation of the attitudes used, are enough to spoil the best speech's effect.

Efforts are worth making, then, to acquire beforehand good habits in this respect, in order that the body, trained with deliberation to impulse of the words, and to adapt itself to their inspiration, may execute of its own accord, and gracefully, the most expressive movements, may itself take the most appropriate attitudes, and not have its limbs working ineffectually or untowardly, with the arms motionless and tied down to the figure, or the hands nailed to the pulpit or the platform balustrade. An abrupt or jerky gesticulation is specially to be avoided, such as a regular swing up and down, down and up again, of the speaker's arms, which gives the appearance of two hatchets incessantly at work. Generally speaking, moderation is better than superfluity of gesticulation. Nothing is more wearisome to the audience than a violent delivery without respite; and next to a monotony of voice, nothing more readily puts it to sleep than a gesture for ever repeated, which marks with exactness each part of the period, as a pendulum keeps time.

This portion of oratorical delivery, more important than is supposed, greatly attended to by the ancients, and too much neglected by the moderns, may be acquired by all the exercises which form the body, by giving it carriage and ease, grace of countenance and motion; and still more by well-directed studies in elocution in what concerns gesture under a clever master. To this should be added the often-repeated study of the example of those speakers who are most distinguished for the quality in question,—which is only too rare at the present day.

But what perhaps conduces more than all this to form the faculty mentioned is the frequenting good company,—that is, of the society most distinguished for elegance of language and fine manners. Nothing can supply the place in this regard of a primary education in the midst of the most refined class. In this medium the youth fashions himself, as it were, of his own accord, by the impressions he is every moment receiving, and the instinctive imitation of what he sees and hears. It is the privilege of high society, and of what used to be called men of the court. There one learns to speak with correctness and grace, almost without study, by the mere force of habit; and if persons of quality combined with this facility of elocution that science, which is to be acquired only by study, and the power of reflection, which is formed chiefly in solitude,—and this is not very compatible with the life of the great world,—they would achieve oratorical successes more easily than other people.

But they are, for the most part, deficient in acquirements,—whereas learned and thinking men generally err in the manner.

To sum up: over and above the store of science and of knowledge indispensable to the orator,—who, beyond everything, should be acquainted with his subject,—the predispositions most needful in the art of speaking, and susceptible of acquisition, are—

1. The habit of taking thought to pieces, and putting it together,—or analysis and synthesis.
2. A knowledge of how to write correctly, clearly, and elegantly.
3. A capacity for the handling of language at will and without effort, and for the sudden construction of sentences, without stoppages or faults.
4. A power of ready and intelligent declamation.
5. A neat, distinct, and emphatic utterance.
6. A good carriage of body.
7. An easy, expressive, and graceful gesticulation.
8. And, above all this, manners and an air of distinction, natural or acquired.

PART II.

CHAPTER V.

DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT.

We have stated all the dispositions, natural or acquired, which are necessary, or, at all events, most useful to the orator. We proceed now to set him to work, and we shall consider him in all the steps of his task, and the successive processes which he has to employ, to carry it prosperously to completion.

It is perfectly understood that we make no pretence to the laying down of rules; our object is not to promulgate a theory nor a didactic treatise. We are giving a few recommendations derived from our own experience,—and each person will take advantage of them as he best may, adopting or leaving according to his convenience what he chooses, and following his own bent or requirements.

Each mind, inasmuch as it is a personality, has its individual character, its own life, which can never be another's, although it resembles all of its kind. If in the physical world there are no two things quite alike, still less are there among intelligent and free creatures. Here, a still more wondrous variety prevails in consequence of a certain liberty which exists, and which acts in these different manners, though limited to certain general conditions of development and subject to the same laws. To this is due the originality of minds, which is, in the intellectual order, what responsibility is in the moral.

But while fully granting this variety of action, springing from the nature, dispositions, and circumstances of each person, still, after all, as we are of the same species and the same race, and as our mental and physical organisation is at the root the same, we must all, when in similar situations, act in a manner fundamentally analogous, although different as to form; and for this reason, indications of a general nature, the result of a long and laborious experience, may, within a certain measure, prove useful to all, or at least to many.

This it is which encourages us to unfold the results of ours, giving them for what they are, without imposing them on anybody, in the deeply sincere desire of doing a service to the young generation which comes after us, and sparing them the rocks and mishaps of a difficult navigation often accomplished by us.

To speak in public is to address several persons at once, an assemblage incidentally or intentionally collected, for some purpose or other. Now this may be done under the most diverse circumstances, and for various objects,—and accordingly the discourse must be adapted both in matter and in form to these varying conditions. Yet are there requisites common to them all, which must be everywhere fulfilled, if the speaker would speak pertinently, and with any chance of success.

In fact, the end of public speaking is to win the assent of the hearers, to imbue them with your own convictions, or at least to incline them to feel, to think, and to will according to your purpose, with reference to a given object.

Hence, whenever you speak, and whatever the audience, there is something to be said which is indicated by the circumstances; there is the way in saying it, or the method and plan according to which you will unfold your thought; and finally there is the realisation of this plan by the actual discourse, composed and uttered on the instant before those whom you would persuade. Thus in an extemporaneous discourse there are three things to be considered:—

1st. The subject being supplied by the circumstances, there is the preparation of the plan or the organisation of the discourse, by means of which you take possession of your subject.

2ndly. The transcript of impression of this plan (originally fixed on paper by the pen) in the head of the speaker, wherein it should be written in a living fashion.

3rdly. The discourse itself, or the successive and, as far as possible, complete spoken realisation of the plan prepared.

Sometimes the two first operations blend into one:—as, for example, you have to speak suddenly without having time to write your plan or to consider it. But when time is allowed, they should be separate, and each requires it own moment.

We proceed to examine these three matters in succession.

CHAP. VI.

PREPARATION OF THE PLAN.

The preparation of the plan of a discourse implies, before anything else, a knowledge of the things about which you have to speak; but a general knowledge is not enough; you may have a great quantity of materials, of documents, and of information in your memory, and not be aware how to bring them to bear. It sometimes even happens that those who know most, or have most matter in their heads, are incapable of rightly conveying it. The over abundance of acquisition and words, crushes the mind, and stifles it, just as the head is paralysed by a too great determination of blood, or a lamp is extinguished by an excess of oil.

You must begin, therefore, by methodising what you know about the subject you wish to treat, and thus, in each discourse, you must adopt as your centre or chief idea, the point to be explained, but subordinate to this idea all the rest, in such a way as to constitute a sort of organism, having its head, its organs, its main limbs, and all the means of connexion and of circulation by which the light of the paramount idea, emanating from the focus, may be communicated to the furthest parts, even to the last thought, and last word; as in the human body the blood emerges from the heart, and is spread throughout all the tissues, animating and colouring the surface of the skin.

Thus only will there be life in the discourse, because a true unity will reign in it,—that is, a natural unity resulting from an interior development, an unfolding from within, and not from an artificial gathering of heterogeneous members and their arbitrary juxtaposition.

This constitutes the difference between words that live and words that are dead. These last may often also have a certain brilliancy from the gorgeousness of the style or the elegance of the sentence, but after having for a moment charmed the ear, they leave the mind cold and the heart empty. The speaker not being master of his subject, which he has not gone into, nor made his own by meditation, reflects or reverberates other people's ideas, without adding to them a particle of his heat or of his life. It is a pale and borrowed light, which like that of the moon, enables you to see vaguely and indistinctly, but neither warms nor fertilises; possessing only a frigid and deadened lustre.

Speakers of this kind, even when they extemporise, speak rather from memory than the understanding or feelings. They reproduce more or less easily shreds of what they have read or heard,—and they have exactly enough mind to effect this reproduction with a certain facility, which tends to fluency or to twaddle. They do not thoroughly know what they are speaking about; they do not themselves understand all they say, still less make others understand. They have not entered into their subject; they have filled their apprehension with a mass of things relating to it, which trickle out gradually as from a reservoir or through a tap which they open and shut at pleasure. Eloquence of this description is but so much plain water, or rather it is so much troubled water, bearing nothing along its passage but words and the spectres of thoughts, and pouring into the hearer's mind disgust, wearisomeness, and nausea. Silence, which would at least leave the desire of listening, were a hundred fold preferable; but these spinners of talk, who give us phrases instead of thoughts, and exclamations instead of feelings, take away all wish to hear and inspire a disgust for speaking itself.

There is no way of avoiding this disadvantage except by means of a well-conceived, deeply-considered, and seriously-elaborated plan. He who knows not how to form such plan, will never speak in a living or an effective manner. He may become a rhetorician; but he will never be an orator.

Let us, then, see by what process this foundation of the orator's task must be laid; for it is to a discourse what the architect's design is to a building.

The plan of a discourse *is the order of the things which have to be unfolded.* You must therefore begin by gathering these together, whether facts or ideas, and examining each separately, in their relation to the subject or purport of the discourse, and in their mutual bearings with respect to it. Next, after having selected those which befit the subject, and rejecting those which do not, you must marshal them around the main idea, in such a way as to arrange them according to their rank and importance, with respect to the result which you have in view. But, what is worth still more than even this composition or synthesis, you should try, when possible, to draw forth, by analysis or deduction, the complete development of one single idea, which becomes not merely the centre, but the very principle of the rest. This is the best manner of explaining or developing, because existences are thus produced in nature, and a discourse, to have its full value, and full efficiency, should imitate her in her vital process, and perfect it by idealising that process.

In fact, reason, when thinking and expressing its thought, performs a natural function, like the plant which germinates, flowers, and bears fruit. It operates, indeed, according to a more exalted power, but it follows in the operation the same laws as all beings endued with life; and the methods of analysis and synthesis, of deduction and induction, essential to it, have their types and symbols in the vital acts of organic beings, which all proceed likewise by the way of expansion and contraction, unfolding and enfolding, diffusion and collection.

The most perfect plan is, therefore, the plan which organises a discourse in the manner nature constitutes any being fraught with life. It is the sole means of giving to speaking a real and natural unity, and, consequently, real strength and beauty, which consist in the unity of life.

This is doubtless the best method; but you can often but make an approach towards it, depending on the nature of the subject and the circumstances in which you have to speak. Hence a few differences, which must be mentioned, in the elaboration of the plan.

In the first place, we give warning that we do not mean to concern ourselves with that popular eloquence which sometimes fulminates like a thunderbolt amidst the anarchy of states in riots, insurrections, and revolutions. Eloquence of that sort has no time to arrange a plan; it speaks according to the circumstances and, as it were, at the dictate of the winds by which it is borne along; it partakes of that disorder which has called it forth, and this is what, for the most part, constitutes its power, which is mighty to destroy. It acts after the fashion of a hurricane, which upsets everything in its course by the blind fury of the passions which it arouses, of the unreasoning wills which it carries with it, and yields no ray from the light of thought, nor a charm from the beauty of style. This instinctive and not very intelligent kind of eloquence is to that of which we are treating as the force of nature, when let loose in the earthquake or in great floods, is to the ordinary and regular laws of Providence, which produces, developes, and preserves whatever exists; it is the force of the steam which bursts the boiler, and spreads disaster and death wherever it reaches; whereas, when powerfully compressed within its proper limits, and directed with intelligence, it works regularly under the control of a skilful hand, and toils orderly and in peace for the welfare of men.

We have no recommendations, then, to offer to the orators of cabal rooms and riots, nor even to those who may be called on to resist or quell them. It is hard to make any suitable preparation in such emergencies, and, besides, they are fraught with so much of the unforeseen, that, in nine cases out of ten, all preparation would be disconcerted. What can be done is what must be done, according to the moment; and, in general, it is the most passionate, the most violent, and he who shouts the loudest who carries the day. Moreover, there is nearly always a species of fatality which prevails in these situations: the force of things crushes the force of men. It is a rock loosened from the mountain-side, and falling headlong, —a torrent swelling as it rushes onward, or the lava of a volcano overflowing: to endeavour to stay them is madness. All one can do is to protect oneself; the evil will be exhausted by its own course, and order will return after the storm.

But in the normal state of society,—and it is for that state we write,—by the very fact of social organisation, and springing out of its forms, there are constantly cases in which you may be called to speak in public, on account of the position which you fill or the duties which you discharge. Thus, committees will continually exist, in which are discussed state or municipal interests, and deliberative or board-room resolutions are passed by a majority of votes, whatever may be the constitution or the power of such assemblies,—considerations with which we have no concern here. There will always be a council of state, general and borough councils, legislative assemblies, parliaments, and committees of a hundred sorts.

In the second place, there will always be tribunals where justice is dispensed, and where the interests of individuals, in collision with those of the public or with one another, have to be contended for before judges whom you must seek to convince or persuade.

There will always be a system of public teaching to enlighten and train the people, whether by the addresses of scientific men, who have to instruct the inhabitants in various degrees, and to inform them what is needed for the good guidance of public and of private life in temporal matters, or by the addresses of the ministers of religion, who, teaching in the name of the Almighty, must unremittingly remind men of their last end, and of the best means with which to meet it, making their earthly and transitory interest subordinate to their celestial and everlasting happiness.

Here, then, we have four great fields in which men are daily called on to speak in public, in order there to discuss the gravest interests of society, of family, and of individuals, or else to unfold truths more or less lofty, often hard to comprehend or to admit, and the knowledge or conviction of which is of the highest moment to the welfare of society and persons. It is anything but immaterial, then, that men belonging to such callings, destined from day to day to debate public or private concerns, or to demonstrate the fundamental truths of science and religion, should know how to do so with method, clearness, power, and gracefulness,—in one word, with all the means of persuasion,—that they may not fail in their mission, and especially that they may disseminate and render triumphant in the minds of men, together with good sense and right reason, that justice, that truth, and those principles, in the absence of which nothing can be stable or durable among nations. This alone would show what importance for good or for evil the orator may acquire in society, since to his lot it falls to prepare, train, and control almost all the resolutions of communities or of individuals, that can modify their present or decide their future condition.

Our remarks then will apply to four classes of speakers:—the political orator; the forensic orator, whether magistrate or advocate; the orator of education, or the professor: and the orator of the Christian pulpit, or the preacher. In these four arenas, the political assembly, the sanctuary of justice, the academy, and the Church, extemporaneous speaking is daily practised, and is capable of the most salutary influence, when fraught with ability, life, and power, or, in other words, when performed with eloquence.

CHAP. VII.

POLITICAL AND FORENSIC SPEAKING.

I WILL say but little of political and forensic speaking, because I have not been used to either, and my wish is to be the exponent of my own experience. I leave professional adepts to give their colleagues the best of all advice, that derived from actual practice. This would require details with which nothing but the exercise of public duties, or of the bench and bar themselves, could make us acquainted. I will therefore confine myself to a few general remarks derived from the theory of the oratorical art, as applied to the duties of the politician and advocate.

The political orator may have two sorts of questions to treat—questions of principle, and questions of fact.

In the latter, which is the more ordinary case, at least among well constituted communities, whose legislation and government rest upon remote precedents and are fixed by experience, the plan of a discourse is easy to construct. With principles acknowledged by all parties, the only point is to state the matter with the circumstances which qualify it and the reasons which urge the determination demanded from the voice of the assembly. The law or custom to which appeal is made, constitutes the major premiss (as it is termed in Logic); the actual case, brought by the circumstances, within that law or those precedents, constitutes the minor premiss; and the conclusion follows of its own accord. In order to carry away the assent of the majority, you describe the advantages of the proposed measure, and the inexpediency of the opposite course, or of any other line.

To treat such subjects properly, there needs no more than good sense, a certain business habit, and a clear conception of what you would say and what you demand. You must thoroughly know what you want, and how to express it. In my mind, this is the best political eloquence, that is, business speaking, expounding the business clearly, succinctly with a knowledge of the matter, saying only what is necessary, with tact and temperately, and omitting all parade of words and big expressions, even those which embody sentiments, save now and then in the exordium and peroration, according to the case. It is in this way that they generally speak in the British Parliament; and these speeches are of some use; they come to something, and carry business forward, or end it. Happy the nation which has no other sort of political eloquence! Unfortunately for us, another sort has prevailed in our own parliamentary assemblies.

Among us, from the day that representative government was established, political discourses have almost invariably turned upon questions of principle; no well established and universally respected constitution,—no settled course of legislation confirmed by custom,—no recognised and admitted precedents,—things all of which strengthen the orator's position, because he has already decisions on which to rest, and examples to give him their support. Time has been almost always employed, or rather wasted in laying down principles, or in trying to enforce what were advanced as principles. The constitution itself and, consequently, the organisation of society and government have always been subjects of dispute; and all our assemblies,—whatever the name with which they have been adorned,—have been directly or indirectly in the state of a constituent (or primary) body.

Now, this is the worst of situations for the orator, for the assemblies themselves, and for the country; and experience has proved it, in spite of some good speeches, and the reputation of several orators of whom France is proud.

In these cases, in fact, the speaker is greatly at a loss how to treat new and unexampled questions, except by foreign instances which are never exactly applicable to another country. His ideas, not being enlightened or supported by experience, remain vague and float in a kind of chaos; and yet, as demonstration requires a basis of some sort, he is obliged to have recourse to philosophic theories, to abstract ideas which may always be disputed, which are often obscure and unintelligible to the majority of the hearers, and are impugned by the votaries of hostile systems. Once launched into the ideas of philosophers the debate knows neither limits nor law. The most irreconcilable opinions meet and clash, and it is not always light which springs from their collision. On the contrary the longer the deliberation continues, the thicker the darkness becomes; Parliament degenerates into an academy of philosophers, an arena of sophists and rhetoricians; and, as something must be concluded, either because of the pressure of necessity, or in consequence of the wearisomeness of the speeches and the satiety of debate, the discussion is closed without the question having been settled, and the votes, at least those of the majority, are given, not in accordance with any convictions newly acquired, but with the signal of each voter's party.

It is said that such a course is necessary in an assembly, if business is to be transacted; and I believe it, since there would otherwise be no end of the deliberation. But it must be conceded to me withal, that to vote from confidence in party leaders, and because these have marked out the path to be pursued, is not a very enlightened way of serving one's country and discharging the trust reposed by a constituency.

Unfortunately, decisions thus formed lead to nothing permanent, and that is the fatal thing both for the assemblies and for the nation. They found nothing, because they are not held in serious regard by a community, divided like their Parliaments into majorities and minorities, which obtain the mastery in turn over each other. It comes to pass that what one government does the next cancels; and as the battle is perpetually renewed, and parties competing for power attain it in more or less rapid succession, every form of contradiction, within a brief space, appears and vanishes, each having sufficiently prevailed in rotation to destroy its rival.

Hence a profound discredit in public opinion for laws continually passed and continually needing to be passed again, and thus incapable of taking root either in the minds of the citizens or in their reverence. Legislation becomes a species of chaos in which nothing can be solidly fixed, because it abounds with elements of revolt which combat and disorganise whatever is produced there.

Moreover,—and this too is a calamity for the country,—as parties are, for the most part, not unevenly matched, and as the majority depends on a few votes, in order to come to a decision so habitually uncertain, it is necessary, on important occasions, to make a fusion or coalition of parties in one way or another by the lures of private interest, which can be effected only through mutual concessions; and then, when unanimity appears to have been procured in the mass of stipulations, each person, desirous of obtaining his own guarantees, requires that some special provision, on his account, be introduced in some particular to the subversion of the general design. Now, let but three or four parties exist in a national assembly (and it is a blessing if there be no more), and it is easy to see what sort of law it will be which is thus made; a species of compound, mixed of the most irreconcilable opinions; a monstrous being, the violently united parts of which wage an intestine war, and which, therefore, after all the pain which its production has cost, is incapable of life. Nor can such laws be applied; and after a disastrous trial, if they are not presently abolished by the party which next obtains the mastery in its turn, they fall into disuse, or operate only by dint of exceptions and makeshifts, remaining as a cumber and a clog in the wheels of the political machine, which they continually threaten with dislocation or an upset.

Whatever may have been said or done in our own day, there is nothing more deplorable for a people than a constitution-making assembly; for it is a collection, of philosophers or of men who fancy they are such, who do not quite understand themselves, and assuredly do not understand each other. Then are the destinies of a nation, its form of government, its administration, its condition and its fortune, its wellfare and its misery, its glory and its shame, consigned to the hazards and the contradictions of systems and theories.

Now, only name me a single philosopher who has uttered the truth, and the whole truth, about the principles, metaphysical, moral, and political, which should serve as the basis of the social structure. Have they not in this most serious concern, to even a greater degree than in other matters, justified that remark of Cicero, that *there is not an absurdity which has not found some philosopher to maintain it?* If you set several of them together, then, to work out a constitution, how can you hope they will agree? They cannot agree except in one way, —that which we just now described,—by mutual concessions extorted from interest, not from conviction; and the force of things will oblige them to produce a ridiculous and impracticable result, repugnant to the good sense and conscience of the nation.

But how then, it will be said, make a nation's constitution? To this I answer, a nation's constitution is not made, it grows of itself; or rather it is Divine Providence, who assumes the office of making it by the process of centuries, and writes it with His finger in a people's history. It was thus the English constitution was formed, and that is why it lasts.

Or if, unhappily, after a revolution which has destroyed all a country's precedents, which has shaken and uprooted everything in the land, it becomes necessary to constitute it anew, we must then do as the ancients did, who had more sense than we have in this respect; we must entrust the business to one man endowed with an intelligence and an authority adequate to this great feat, and impersonating, for the moment, the entire nation; we must commit it to a Lycurgus, a Solon, or a Pythagoras; for nothing needs more wisdom, reason, or courage than such an enterprise, and men of genius are not always equal to it, if circumstances do not assist them. At all events, to this we must come after revolutions, and their various experiments of parliamentary constitution. The seven or eight constitutions of the first republic ended in that of the empire which sprang full armed from the head of the new Jupiter; and the Constituent Assembly of 1848, with its new birth so laboriously produced, but no more capable of life than the others, vanished in a single day before the constitution of the new empire, which is nothing at the root but that of the old. By this road we have come—if not to that liberty of which they have said so much, but which they never allowed us to behold—to good sense and order, and to the peace of social life.

In one word, then, I will say, to close what relates to political eloquence: if you have to speak on a matter in which there are admitted principles and authorised precedents, study it well in its connexion with both, that you may have a foundation and examples. Then examine it in all its actual elements, all its ramifications and consequences. You will then easily construct your plan, which must be determined by the nature of things, and when you have well conceived and pondered it, you will speak easily, simply, and effectively.

But if you must discuss the origin of society, the rights of men and nations, natural rights and social rights, and other questions of that kind, I have but one advice to give you: begin by reading on these questions all the systems of the philosophers and jurists, and after doing so, you will be so much in the dark, and will find such difficulty in arriving at a rational conviction, that if you are sincere and honest, that is, unwilling to assert or maintain anything except what you know or believe, you will decline speaking, and adopt the plan of keeping silence, in order not to add to darkness or increase the confusion.

As to the bar, with the exception of the adjustments of corn prices* and the harangues at the opening of the courts, which are didactic or political, and therefore, belong to another class of speaking,* the addresses or pleadings whether by advocates, or from the floor of the court, are always business speeches; and accordingly the plan of them is easy, because it is pointed out by the facts, and by the development of the matter in litigation. Besides, the speaker, in this description of discourse, has his papers in his hand; and a man must be truly a blockhead, or else have a very bad cause to sustain, if he do not with ease keep to the line of his subject, to which everything conspires to recall and guide him. It is the easiest sort of speaking, because it demands the least invention, and because by comparing, however superficially, the facts of the case with the articles of the law, the reasons for and against occur of themselves, according to the side you wish to espouse, and the only thing in general to be done is to enumerate them with an explanation of each.

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* In France and some other countries, as in England formerly, government interferes to settle the market conditions of certain staples, such as corn, flour, and bread.

And yet, in this, as in everything, good speeches are rare, because talent is rare in all things; it is surely easier to be decently successful in a description of speaking which comprises a number of details, proceeds entirely upon facts, and is constantly supported by notes and corroborative documents.

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* [Not applicable to the United States.]

The preparation of the plan in addresses of this nature, costs, therefore, little trouble. The character of the subject bears nearly all the burden, and not much remains for the invention or imagination. We should add that, having never pleaded, we cannot speak in any way from experience, and theory is hardly of any use in such matters.

The great difficulty for the forensic orator is not to develope his matter, or to discover what to say, but, on the contrary, to restrict it, to concentrate it, and to say nothing but what is necessary. Advocates are generally prolix and diffuse, and it must be said in their excuse, they are led into this by the nature of their subject, and by the way in which they are compelled to treat it. Having constantly facts to state, documents to interpret, contradictory arguments to discuss, they easily become lost in details to which they are obliged to attach great importance; and indeed more or less subtile discussion on the articles of the law, of facts, and of objections occupies a very large space. It requires and exceedingly clear mind and no ordinary talent, to avoid being carried along by the current of this too easy eloquence, which degenerates so readily into mere fluency. Here, more than elsewhere, moderation and sobriety deserve praise, and the aim should be, not to say a great deal, and to avoid saying too much.

CHAP. VIII.

SPEAKING FROM THE CHRISTIAN PULPIT, AND IN TEACHING.

WE unite in our enquiry so far as the preparing of a plan is concerned, both pulpit and professorial speaking. Although there is a striking difference between these two modes of speaking, on account of the situation of the orators, and of the subjects which they handle,—a difference which we will indicate in passing,—yet a great analogy subsists between them, especially in what regards the plan; for they both aim at instructing the hearers as their ultimate end, —that is, they aim at making the hearers understand and admit a truth, at impressing it on their conviction or persuasion, and at showing them the best means of applying it or putting it in practice. .

This resemblance, which may seem paradoxical at first sight, is nevertheless founded in nature, if these several kinds of discourses be thoroughly appreciated and considered, as to the end which they have in view, and not merely as to the oratorical form or words.

What, in fact, is the preacher's grand aim? Whither must he tend with all his might? What do the nature and the gravity of his ministry make incumbent upon him? Clearly, the religious and moral instruction of those who listen to him, in order to induce them by a knowledge and conviction of the Divine Word, to observe it in their conduct, and to apply to their actions its precepts, counsels, and inspirations. Wherefore, whether he expound a dogma, or morals, or what relates to worship and to discipline, he always takes as his starting point and basis some truth doctrinal or practical, which he has to explain, analyse, unfold, maintain, and elucidate. He must shed light by means of and around that truth, that it may enter the hearer's mind, and produce therein a clear view, a conviction, and that it may arouse or increase his faith; and this faith, this conviction, this enlightenment must induce him to attach himself to it, to seize it through his volition, and to realise it in his life.

However great may be, after that, the ornament and pomp of the style, the brilliancy and variety of imagery, the movement and pathos of the phrases, the accent and the action: whether he excite powerfully the imagination, or move the sensibility, awake the passions, or cause the heartstrings to vibrate, all that is well and good, but only as accessory, and because all these means help the end, which is always the transmission of the truth. All these things lose, without the principal one, their real efficacy; or, if they produce any effect, it will neither be deep nor lasting, from there being no basis to the speech; and from the orator having laboured much on the outside, and adorned what appears on the exterior, will have placed and left nothing inside. In one word, there is no idea in those words; only phrases, images and movements. I know well that one can carry away men with these, and inflame them for the moment; but it is a blinding influence, that often leads to evil, or at least to an exaggeration that cannot be kept up. It is a passing warmth that soon cools in the midst of obstacles, and fades easily in the confusion it has caused through imprudence and precipitation.

An idea, or the absence of an idea, teaching earnestly, or speaking only to the imagination, convincing the mind and persuading volition, or carrying away the heart by the excitation of sensibility,—these distinguish sacred orators as well as others. But to instruct and convince the listener, one must be instructed and convinced. To make truth pass into other minds, one must possess it in one's own; and this can only be done both for oneself and for others, independently of supernatural faith, which is the gift of God, by an earnest meditation of the holy Word, and the energetic and persevering labour of thought applied to the truth one wishes to expound, and the point of doctrine one has to teach. The same exists in all kinds of scientific or literary teaching.

It is evident in philosophy. He who teaches has always a doctrine to expound. Let him treat of faculties of the soul; of the operation of thought and its method; of duties and rights; of justice; of what is good; and even of what is beautiful; of the Supreme Being; of beings and their laws; of the finite and the infinite; of contingent and necessary matter; of the relative and the absolute: he has always before him an idea to expose, to develope and illustrate; and the acquaintance with this idea that he tries to form in his disciples must help to make them better as well as more enlightened, or else philosophy is no more worthy of her name. She would neither be the lover of wisdom nor its pursuit.

If in the teaching of natural sciences the professor limits himself to practical experiences, to describe facts and phenomena, he will, no doubt, be able to amuse and interest his listeners, youth particularly; but then he is only a painter, an experimenter, or an empiric. His is natural philosophy in sport, and his lectures are a kind of show, or recreative sittings. To be really a professor he must teach, and he can only teach through ideas; that is, by explaining the laws that rule facts, and by connecting them as much as possible with the whole of the admirable system of the creation. He must lead his disciples up to the heights that command facts; down in the depths from whence spring phenomena; and there will only be science in his teaching if he limits it to some heads of doctrine, the connexion of which constitutes precisely the science of which he is the master.

He will then be able to follow them in their consequences, and to confirm their theory by applications to mechanical and industrial arts, or to any other use for humanity.

The teaching of letters and of arts is in the same condition: it always must be directed by the exposition of principles, rules, and methods. It is not sufficient to admire ecstatically great models, and become enthusiastic for master works. It is something without doubt, when the enthusiasm is sincere and the admiration is truly felt; but the teaching must be didactic; he must himself learn while he teaches the secret of the work; he must indicate the process, and direct the work. He must teach the pupils to acknowledge, to have a taste for what is beautiful, and to reproduce it; and for that we must be able to say in what the beautiful consists in each art, and how we come to discern it in nature, to preserve or imagine it in our minds while idealising it, and to transfer the ideal into reality by the resources of art.

Although here facts and examples have more influence, because feeling and imagination play the chief part in the work, yet ideas are also necessary, and especially in literature, poetry, and the arts of language. That which chiefly distinguishes artists and schools from each other is the predominance of the idea, or the predominance of the form. The most beautiful forms in the world, without idea, remain superficial, cold, and dead. The idea alone gives life to any human production, as the Divine ideas vivify the productions of nature. For in all things the spirit quickeneth; but the letter, when alone, killeth. Therefore, he who teaches literature or art ought to have a method, a certain science of his art, the principles of which he should expound, by rules and processes, applying them practically, and supporting them with examples.

Were we to pass in review all kinds of instruction one after another, we should find the same end and the same conditions as in pulpit discourse or in religious teaching; namely: the clear exposition of same truth for the instruction of the hearer, with a view to convince him and induce him to act according to his conviction.

Let us see, then, at present in a general way, how we should set about preparing the plan of a discourse, and doing what we have just said, whether as a preacher or as a professor. We shall here speak from experience, a circumstance which gives us some confidence, because we are about to expound with simplicity what we have been accustomed to do for nearly forty years in teaching philosophy, and what we still do, and desire to do while any strength and energy remain, in the pulpit.

CHAP. IX.

DETERMINATION OF THE SUBJECT AND CONCEPTION OF THE IDEA OF THE DISCOURSE.

He who wishes to speak in public must, above all, see clearly on what he has to speak, and rightly conceive what he has to say. The precise determination of the subject, and the idea of the discourse,—these are the two first stages of the preparation.

It is not so easy as it seems to know upon what one is to speak: many orators, at least, seem to be ignorant of it, or to forget it, in the course of their address; for it is sometimes their case to speak of all things except those which would best relate to the occasion. This exact determination of the subject is still more needful in extemporisation; for there many more chances of discursiveness exist, The address not being sustained by the memory or by notes, the mind is more exposed to the influences of the moment; and nothing is required but the failure or inexactitude of a word, the suggestion of a new thought, a little inattention, to lure it from the subject, and throw it into some crossroad, which takes it far away. Add the necessity of continuing, when once a speech is begun, because to stop is embarrassing; to withdraw, a disgrace.

Therefore, in order to lead and sustain the progress of a discourse, one must clearly know whence one starts, and whither one goes, and never lose sight of either the point of departure or the destination. But, to effect this, the road must be measured beforehand, and the principal distance marks must have been placed. There is a risk else of losing one's way, and then, either one arrives at no end, even after much fatigue, productive of interminable discourses leading to nothing, — or if one at last reaches the destination, it is after an infinity of turns and circuits, which have wearied the hearer as well as the speaker, without profit or pleasure for anybody.

The determination of the subject ought not to fix merely the point upon which one has to speak, but further the radiation of this point and the circumference which it will embrace.

The circle clearly may be more or less extensive, for all things are connected in the world of ideas, even more than in that of bodies, and as, in fine, all is in each, you *may* speak of everything in connexion with anything, and this is what too often befalls those who extemporise.

Then the discourse leads the mind, not the mind the discourse. It is a ship which falls away for want of a helm, and he who is within, unable to control her, abandons himself to the current of the stream, at the risk of wrecking himself upon the first breaker, and not knowing where he shall touch the shore.

It is but wise, then, not to begin a speech without having at least by a rapid general view, if there be no time to prepare a plan, decided the main line of the discourse, and sketched in the mind an outline of its most prominent features. In this precepts are not of great use; good sense, tact, and a clear and lively intelligence are requisite to seize exactly the point in question and to hold to it; and for this end nothing is better than to formularise it at once by some expression, some proposition, which may serve to reduce the subject to its simplest shape, and to determine its proportions.

A question well stated is half solved. In like manner a subject well fixed, admits of easier treatment, and singularly facilitates the discourse. As to the rest, the occasion, the circumstances, and the nature of the subject, do much in the same direction. There are cases in which the subject determines itself by the necessity of the situation and the force of things. The case is more embarrassing when the speaker is master of circumstances, as in teaching, where he may distribute his materials at his pleasure, and design each lesson's part. In any case, and howsoever he sets to work, each discourse must have its own unity, and constitute a whole, in order that the hearer may embrace in his understanding what has been said to him, may conceive it in his own fashion, and be able to reproduce it at need.

But the general view of the subject, and the formula which gives it precision, are not enough; the IDEA of it, the living idea, the parent idea, which is the source of the life in a discourse, and without which the words will be but a dead letter, must be obtained.

What is this parent idea, and how do we obtain it?

In the physical world, whatever has life comes from a germ, and this germ, previously contained in another living existence, there takes life itself, and on its own account, by the process of fecundation. Fecundated, it quits its focus; *punctum saliens*, it radiates and tends to develope itself by reason of the primordial life which it bears within it, and of the nurture it receives; then by gradual evolution, it acquires organic form, constituted existence, individuality, and body.

It is the same in the intellectual world, and in all the productions of our mind, and by our mind outside of itself, through language and discourse. There are in our understanding germs of mental existences, and when they are evoked by a mind which is of their own nature, they take life, become developed and organised, first in the depth of the understanding which is their brooding receptacle, and finally passing into the outer world by that speech which gives them a body, they become incarnate there, so to speak, and form living productions, instinct with more or less of life by reason of their fecundated germ, of the understanding which begets them, and of the mind which vivifies them.

In every discourse, if it have life, there is a parent idea or fertile germ, and all the parts of the discourse are like the principal organs and the members of an animated body. The propositions, expressions, and words resemble those secondary organs which connect the principal, as the nerves, muscles, vessels, tissues, attaching them to one another and rendering them copartners in life and death. Then amid this animate and organic mass there is the spirit of life, which is in the blood, and is everywhere diffused with the blood from the heart, life's céntre, to the epidermis. So in eloquence, there is the spirit of the words, the soul of the orator, inspired by the subject, his intelligence illumined with mental light, which circulates through the whole body of the discourse, and pours therein brightness, heat, and life. A discourse without a parent idea, is a stream without a fountain, a plant without a root, a body without a soul; empty phrases, sounds which beat the air, or a tinkling cymbal.

Nevertheless, let us not be misapprehended;

if we say that a discourse requires a parent idea, we do not mean that this idea must be a *new one*, never before conceived or developed by any one. Were this so, no more orators would be possible, since already, from Solomon's day, there has been nothing new under the sun, and the cycle of ages continually brings back the same things under different forms.

It is not likely, then, that in our day there should be more new ideas than in that of the King of Israel; but ideas, like all the existences of this world, are renewed in each age, and for each generation. They are reproduced under varied forms and with modifications of circumstances: "Non nova sed novè," said Vincent of Lerins. The same things are differently manifested; and thus they adapt themselves to the wants of men, which change with time and place.

For this reason the orator may, and should say, ancient things, in substance; but he will say them in another manner, corresponding with the dispositions of the men of his epoch, and he will add the originality of his individual conception and expression.

For this purpose, in all the rigour of the word he should *conceive* his subject, in order to have the *idea* of it; this idea must be born in him, and grow, and be organized in a living manner; and as there is no conception without fecundation, this mental fecundation must come to him from without, either spontaneously, or, at least, in an invisible manner, as in the inspirations and illuminations of genius,—or, what oftener happens, by means of the attentive consideration of the subject and meditation upon the thoughts of others.

In any case, whatever be the fashion of the understanding's fecundation, and from whatever quarter light comes to it,—and light is the life of the mind,—he must absolutely conceive the idea of what he shall say, if he is to say anything fraught with life, and not new but original,—that is, engendered, born in his mind, and bearing the character of it. His thoughts will then be proper to him (his own) by virtue of their production, and despite their resemblance to others,—as children belong to their mother, notwithstanding their likeness to all the members of the human race. But they all and each possess something new for the family and generation in which they are to live. It is all we would say when we require of him who has to speak in public, that he should have, at least, an idea to expound, sprung mentally, if we may so say, from his loins, and produced alive in the intellectual world by his words, as in the physical order a child by its mother. This simply means, in the language of common sense, that the orator sould have a clear conception of what he would say.

CHAP. X.

CONCEPTION OF THE SUBJECT.——DIRECT METHOD.

How ensure a good conception of your subject? There are two ways or methods; the one direct, which is always the best when you can take it; the other indirect, longer and less certain, but more accessible to beginners, more within reach of ordinary minds, and serving to form them. You may indeed use both ways; either coming back the second way, when you have gone out by the first, or beginning with the easiest, in order to arrive at the most arduous.

The main way, or that which by preëminence deserves the designation, consists in placing yourself immediately in relation with the object about which you have to speak, so as to consider it face to face, looking clean through it with the mind's eye, while you are yourself irradiated with the light which the object gives forth.

In this crossing of rays, and by means of their interpenetration, a conception, representing that object which begets it, is produced in the understanding, and partakes of the nature of that in which it is formed, and which contains it.

In this case a fecundation of the mind, or *subject*, is affected by the *object*, and the result is the idea of the object, begotten and brought into a living state in the understanding by its own force. This idea is always in the ratio of the two factors or causes which combine to call it forth, of their relation to each other, and of the success with which the union is effected.

If the mind be simple, unwarped, pure, greedy of knowledge, and eager after truth,—when it places itself before the object fully, considers it generally, at the same time that it opens itself unreservedly to its light with a wish to be penetrated by it, and to penetrate it, to become united to it with all its strength and capacity; and if, further, it have the energy and persistency to maintain itself in this attitude of attention without distraction, and collecting all its faculties, concentrating all its lights, it makes them converge upon this single point, and becomes wholly absorbed in the union which thus ensures intellectual fecundity, the conception then takes place after a normal and a plenary fashion. The very life of the object, or thing contemplated, passes with its light into the subject or mind contemplating, and from the life-endowed mental germ springs the IDEA, at first weak and darkling, like whatever is newly-begotten, but growing afterwards by the labor of the mind and by nutrition. It will become gradually organised, full-grown, and complete; as soon as its constitution is strong enough to emerge from the understanding, it will seek the birth of words, in order to unfold to the world the treasures of truth and life which it contains within it.

But if it be only examined obliquely, under an incidental or restricted aspect, the result will be a conception analogous to the connexion which produces it, and consequently an idea of the object, possessing perhaps some truth and some life, but representing the object only in one phase, only in part, and thus leading to a narrow and inadequate knowledge.

It is clear that as it is in the physical, so in the moral world. Knowledge is formed by the same laws as existence, the knowledge of metaphysical like that of sensible things, although these differ essentially in their nature and in their limits. The laws by which life is transmitted, are those by which thought is transmitted, which is, after its own fashion, conceived and generated; a fact arising from the application to the production of all living beings of the eternal law of the Divine generation, by which the Being of beings, the Principle of life, Who is life itself, engenders in Himself His image or His Word, by the knowledge which he has eternally of Himself, and by the love of His own perfection which he contemplates.

Thus with the human mind, which is made in the image of God, and which reproduces a likeness of it in all its operations; the knowledge of a human mind is also a sort of generation. It has no knowledge of sensible things, except through the images which they produce in the understanding, and that such images should arise, it is requisite that the understanding be penetrated by the impressions of objects, through the senses and their organs. Hence appearances, images, ideas, or to speak more philosophically, conceptions of exterior things, which are not only the raw material of knowledge, but the principles more or less pregnant of the sciences of nature, according as they may have been formed in the mind. This accounts in part for the power of first impressions, the virtue of the first aspect, or of the primary meeting of the "*subject*" and object.

Now we have intelligible and spiritual, as well as material and sensible existences around us. We live by our mind and by its intercourse with that of our fellow creatures in a moral world, which is realised and perpetuated by speech and in language, as physical existences are fixed in the soil, and from the soil developed. The language spoken by a human community, and constituting the depository, the magazine of the thoughts, ideas, and knowledge of that community, forms a true world of minds, a sphere of intellectual existences, having its own life, light, and laws.

Now it is with these subtile and, as it were, ethereal existences, which are condensed in words, like vapour in clouds,—it is with these metaphysical realities that our mind must come into contact, in order by them to be fecundated, without other medium than the signs which express them, and in order to conceive the ideas which science has to develope by analysis, and which the speaker will unfold in his discourse, so as to bring home their truth to those who are ignorant of it. Anybody must feel how difficult it is to hold communion by the sight of the mind with things so delicate, so evanescent, things which cannot be seized except by their nebulous and ever shifting dress of language; and how much more difficult it is to persist long in this contemplation, and how soon the intelligence gets fatigued of pursuing objects so scarcely tangible, objects escaping its grasp on all sides. In truth it is only a very rare and choice class of minds which know how to look directly, fixedly, and perseveringly at objects of pure intelligibility. For the same reason these have greater fecundity, because entering into a close union with the objects of their thought, and becoming thoroughly penetrated by them, they take in the very nature and vitality of things, with the light which they emit.

These are the minds, moreover, that conceive ideas and think for the rest of mankind, whose torches and guides they are in the intellectual world; and as their words, the vehicle of their conceptions and thoughts, are employed during instruction in reproducing, that is, in engendering within the minds of their fellow-creatures the ideas which the light of the things themselves has produced in their own, they are called *men of genius*, that is, generators by intelligence, or transmitters by means of language, of the light and life of the mind.

This consideration brings us to the second way or method by which feebler intellects, or such as have talent without having genius, may also succeed in conceiving the *idea* of the subject upon which they are about to speak.

CHAP. XI.

CONCEPTION OF THE SUBJECT.—INDIRECT METHOD.

THOSE who have to treat a subject which has not been treated before, are obliged to draw from a consideration of the subject, and from their own resources, all they have to say. Then, according to their genius and their penetration, and in proportion to the manner in which they put themselves in presence of the things, will their discourse evince more or less truth, exactitude, and depth. They are sure to be original, since they are the first comers,—and, in general, the first view, which is not influenced by any prejudice or bias, but which arises from the natural impression of the object upon the soul, produces clear and profound ideas, which remain in the kingdom of science or of art as common property, and a sort of patrimony for those who come later. Afterwards, when the way is opened, and many have trodden it, leaving their traces behind them, when a subject has been discussed at various times and among several circles, it is hard to be original, in the strict sense, upon that topic; that is, to have new thoughts—thoughts not expressed before. But it is both possible and incumbent to have that other species of originality, which consists in putting forth no ideas except such as one has made one's own by a conception of one's own, and are thus quickened with the life of one's own mind. This is called *taking possession in the finder's name;* and Molière, when he imitated Plautus and Terence; La Fontaine, when he borrowed from Æsop and Phædrus, were not ashamed of the practice. This condition is indispensable, if life is to be imparted to the discourse; and it is this which distinguishes the orator, who draws on his own interior resources even when he borrows, from the actor who impersonates, or the reader who recites the productions of another.

In such a case the problem stands therefore thus:—When you have to speak on a subject already treated by several authors, you must carefully cull their justest and most striking thoughts, analyse and sift these with critical discernment and penetration, then fuse them in your own alembic by a powerful synthetic operation, which, rejecting whatever is heterogeneous, collects and kneads whatever is homogeneous or amalgamable, and fashions forth a complex idea that shall assume consistency, unity, and colour in the understanding by the very heat of the mind's labour.

If we may compare things spiritual with things material, — and we always may, since they are governed by the same laws, and hence their analogy, — we would say that, in the formation of an idea by this method, something occurs similar to what is observed in the production of the ceramic or modeller's art, composed of various elements, earths, salts, metals, alkalies, acids, and the rest, which, when suitably separated, sifted, purified, are first united into one compound, then kneaded, shaped, moulded, or turned, and finally subjected to the action of the fire which combines them in unity, and gives to the whole solidity and splendour.

Thus, the orator who speaks after many

others, and must treat the same topic, ought first to endeavour to make himself acquainted with all that has been written on the subject, in order to extract from the mass the thoughts which best serve his end; he ought then to collect and fuse within his own thought the lights emitted by other minds, gather and converge upon a single point the rays of those various luminaries.

He cannot shirk this labour, if he would treat his subject with fulness and profundity; in a word, if he is in earnest with his business, which is to seek truth, and to make it known. Like every true artist, he has an intuition of the ideal, and to that ideal he is impelled by the divine instinct of his intelligence to lift his conceptions and his thoughts, in order to produce, first in himself and then upon others, by speaking or by whatever is his vehicle of expression, something which shall for ever tend towards it, without ever attaining it. *For ideas*, properly so called, being the very conceptions of the Supreme Mind, the eternal archetypes after which all created things have been modelled with all their powers, the human mind, made after the image of the Creator, yet always finite, whatever its force or its light, can catch but glimpses of them here below, and will always be incapable of conceiving and of reproducing them in their immensity and infinitude.

However, care must be taken here not to allow oneself to be carried away by too soaring a train of considerations, or into too vast a field; all is linked with all, and in things of a higher world this is more especially the case, for there you are in the realm of sovereign unity, and universality. A philosopher, meditating and writing, may give wings to his contemplation, and his flight will never be too lofty nor too vigorous, provided his intelligence be illumined with the true light, and guided in the right path; but the speaker generally stands before an audience who are not on his own level, and whom he must take at theirs. Again, he speaks in a given state of things, with a view to some immediate effect, some definite end. His topic is restricted by these conditions, and his manner of treating it must be subordinated to them, his discourse adapted to them. It is no business of his to say all that might be said, but merely what is necessary or useful in the actual case, in order to enlighten his hearers, and to persuade them. He must, therefore, circumscribe his matter within the limits of his purpose; and his discourse must have just that extent, that elevation, and discretion which the special circumstances demand.

It is with this aim that the orator ought to prepare his materials, and lay in, as it were, the provisions for his discourse.

First, as we have said, he must collect the ingredients of his compost. Then he will do what the bee does, which rifles the flowers—exactly what the bee does; for, by an admirable instinct which never misleads it, it extracts from the cup of the flowers only what serves to form the wax and the honey, the aromatic and the oleaginous particles. But, be it well observed, the bee first nourishes itself with these extracts, digests them, transmutes them, and turns them into wax and honey solely by an operation of absorption and assimilation.

Just so should the speaker do. Before him lie the fields of science and of literature, rich in each description of flower and fruit,—every hue, every flavor. In these fields he will seek his booty, but with discernment; and choosing only what suits his work, he will extract from it, by *thoughtful* reading and by the process of mental tasting (his thoughts all absorbed in his topic, and darting at once upon whatever relates to it), everything which can minister nutriment to his intelligence, or fill it, or even perfume it; in a word, the substantial or aromatic elements of his honey, or *idea*, but ever so as to take in and to digest, like the bee, in order that there may be a real transformation and appropriation, and consequently a production fraught with life, and to live.

The way in which he should set to work, or at least the way in which we have ourselves proceeded under similar circumstances, and with good results, is this.

[We hope we shall be forgiven for these details *of the interior*, these private managements of an orator: we think them more useful to show how to contrive than the didactics of teaching would be; they are the contrivances of the craft, secrets of the workshop. Besides, we are not writing for adepts, but for novices; and these will be better helped by practical advice, and by the results of positive experience, than by general rules or by speculations.]

Above all, then, you must decide with the utmost clearness what it is you are going to speak upon. Many orators are too vague in this; and it is an original vice which makes itself felt in their whole labour, and, later, in their audience. Nothing is worse than vagueness in a discourse; it produces obscurity, diffuseness, rigmarole, and wearisomeness. The hearer does not cling to a speaker who talks without knowing what he would say, and who, undertaking to guide him, seems to be ignorant whither he is going.

The topic once well settled, the point to be treated once well defined, you know where to go for help. You ask for the most approved writers on that point; you get together their works, and begin to read them with attention, pausing, above all, upon the chapters and passages which specially concern the matter in question.

Always read pen or pencil in hand. Mark the parts which most strike you, those in which you perceive the germ of an idea or of anything new to you; then, when you have finished your reading, make a note, let it be a substantial note, not a mere transcription or extract—a note embodying the very thought which you have apprehended, and which you have already made your own by digestion and assimilation.

Above all, let these notes be short and lucid; put them down one under the other, so that you may afterwards be able to run over them at a single view.

Mistrust long readings from which you carry nothing away. Our mind is naturally so lazy, the labour of thought is so irksome to it, that it gladly yields to the pleasure of reading other people's thoughts, in order to avoid the trouble of forming any itself; and then time passes in endless readings, the pretext of which is some hunt after materials, and which comes to nothing. The mind ruins its own sap, and gets burdened with trash: it is as though overladen with undigested food, which gives it neither force nor light.

Quit not a book until you have wrested from it whatever relates the most closely to your subject. Not till then go on to another, and get the cream off, if I may so express myself, in the same manner.

Repeat this labour with several, until you find that the same things are beginning to return, or nearly so, and that there is nothing to gain in the plunder; or suppose that you feel your understanding to be sufficiently furnished, and that your mind now requires to digest the nutriment which it has taken.

Rest awhile, in order to let the intellectual digestion operate. Then, when these various aliments begin to be transformed, interpenetrated, comes the labour of the desk, which will extract from the mass of nourishment its very juices, distribute them everywhere, and will contribute to form, from diversity of products, unity of life.

It is with the mind as with the body; after nourishment and repose, it requires to act and to transmit. When it has repaired its strength, it must exert it; when it has received it, it must give; after having concentrated itself, it needs dilation; it must yield back what it has absorbed; fulness unrelieved is as painful to it as inanition. These are the two vital movements, —attraction and expansion.

The moment this fulness is felt, the moment of acting or thinking for yourself has arrived.

You take up your notes and you carefully re-read them face to face with the topic to be treated. You blot out such as diverge from it too much, or are not sufficiently substantial, and by this elimination you gradually concentrate and compress the thoughts which have the greatest reciprocal bearing. You work these a longer or a shorter time in your understanding, as in a crucible, by the inner fire of reflection, and, in nine cases out of ten, they end by amalgamating and fusing into one another, until they form a homogeneous mass, which is reduced, like the metallic particles in incandescence, by the persistent hammering of thought, into a dense and solid oneness.

As soon as you become conscious of this unity, you obtain a glimpse of the essential idea of the composition, and in that essential idea, the leading ideas which will distribute your topic, and which already appear like the first organic lineaments of the discourse.

In the case supposed, the idea forms itself synthetically, or by a sort of intellectual coagulation, which is fraught with life, because there is really a crossing or interpenetration of various thoughts in one single mind, which has assimilated them to one another only by first assimilating them to itself. They take life in its life which unifies them, and although the idea be thus compounded of a multiplicity of elements, nevertheless as these elements have been transformed into that one mind's own thought, they become harmonised therein, and constitute a new production endowed by the understanding in which it is called forth, with something individualising and original.

However, a different result sometimes occurs, and this happens particularly in the most stirring and fertile intellects. The perusal of other men's thoughts, and the meditation thus excited, becomes for them not the efficient cause, but the occasion, of the requisite idea, which springs into birth by a sudden illumination, in the midst of their mental labour over other people's ideas, as the spark darts from the flint when stricken by steel.

It is a mixed method between the direct, which is that of nature, and the indirect which we have been describing. It partakes of the former, because there is in it a kind of generation of the idea which is instantaneously effected; but it is a generation less instinct with life, and, as it were, at second hand; for it is not formed in the mind by the action of the thing itself, but by its image or reflection in a human expression. It partakes of the second method, because the birth of the idea is brought about by reading and meditation.

The idea which is its offspring, though inferior to that engendered by the object itself, is more natural, and, therefore, more living than that produced by synthesis; simpler, more one, more original; it is more racy of the mind, which has conceived it at one effort, and from which it springs full of life, as Minerva in the fable sprang full-armed from the head of Jupiter cleft by Vulcan's hatchet. Thus it is with the orator's understanding, which is suddenly opened by a thought that strikes it, and from which arises completely organised the idea of his topic to become the Minerva or wisdom of his discourse. In this case the plan of his composition arranges itself spontaneously. The parent idea takes the place of sovereignty at once, by right of birth, and all the others group themselves around her, and to her subordinate themselves naturally, in order to cooperate in better displaying her and doing her honour, as bees around the queen bee to work under her direction at the common task, or as, in revolutions and the emergencies which end them, nations instinctively rally about the man of Providence, raised up by the Almighty to re-establish order, equity, and peace.

CHAP. XII.

THE FORMATION AND THE ARRANGEMENT OF IDEAS.

The idea is formed either through the fecundation of the understanding by the object which there engenders its image and deposits its life, or by the bringing together of various elements transformed and made one by the absorbing and reflecting operations of the mind; or else by a mixed process which partakes of both these, and which we just now described.

In all three cases, however, at the first moment of conception, there is as yet only a shapeless and vague product which floats, so to say, upon the waters of the understanding, and over which broods the spirit of life which has indeed animated it, but which has still to develope and to organise it, to establish it in a definite state of existence, and to give it an individuality* by means of words and in the discourse.

It is the germ fecundated in the parent soil, but which cannot yet spring forth without danger, for want of the necessary organisation to live and take its place in the world to which it is destined to belong. Therefore, a period of incubation and *organogenesis* is indispensable to it under pain of its abortion, and the loss of its life.

This is precisely the speaker's case; he has conceived his idea, and he bears it within the entrails of his understanding. He must not commit it to the day until it is able to appear with the conditions of vitality, that is to say, before it is organised in all its parts, in order that it may properly perform its functions in the world which it is to enter;—neglect this, and you will have an abortive discourse, words without life.

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* "*A local habitation and a name.*" There is throughout the whole of these passages a striking analogy between the thoughts of Shakspeare, as they are hinted in his brief picture of the poet, and those which M. Bautain, applying them to the orator, more philosophically analyses and more fully developes.

Sometimes the idea thus conceived, is developed and formed rapidly, and then the plan of the discourse arranges itself on a sudden, and you throw it upon paper warm with the fervour of the conception which has just taken place, as the metal in a state of fusion is poured into the mould, and fills at a single turn all its lineaments. It is the case most favourable to eloquence,—that is, if the idea has been well conceived, and if it be fraught with light.

But in general, one must not be in a hurry to form one's plan. In nature, life always needs a definite time for self-organization,—and it is only ephemeral beings which are quickly formed, for they quickly pass away. Everything destined to be durable is of slow growth, and both the solidity and the strength of existing things bear a direct ratio to the length of their increase and the matureness of their production.

When, therefore, you have conceived an idea, unless it be perfectly clear to you at the first glance, be in no haste to throw it into shape. Carry it for a time in your mind, as the mother carries her offspring, and during this period of gestation (or bearing), by the very fact that the germ lives in your understanding, and lives with its life, it will of itself tend towards development and completion. By means of the spiritual, the mental incubation of meditation, it will pass from the egg to the embryo, and when sufficiently mature to be trusted to the light of day, it will spontaneously strive to break from confinement, and to issue forth to view;—then comes the moment for writing.

The organic generation of ideas is as impossible to explain fully as that of bodies. Nature's work is mysterious in the one respect as in the other; only there being a part for freewill and conscience to play in the intellectual sphere, we see a little more clearly in this than in the other, and co-operate a little more directly.

The understanding, in fact, is a spiritual soil which has feeling, consciousness, and up to a certain point, a knowledge of whatever is taking place in it. We cannot conceive an idea without being conscious of it; for the very property of a mental conception is the formation within us of a new knowledge; and thus we are not left, in this respect, as in the physical order, to the operation of the blind force of nature. The mother of the Maccabees said to her children—"I know not how you were formed, . . . nor how the life you have received was created;" now, the understanding, which is the mother of the ideas engendered by it and living in it, has the privilege not only of feeling but of seeing their formation; otherwise it would not be understanding. It assists at the development of its ideas, and co-operates thercin, actively and intelligently, by the functions of thought and reflection, by meditation and mental toil. Such is the difference between physical and moral nature, between the life of the body and that of the mind, between the action of animate matter and that of intelligence.

The thoughts apply themselves to a frequent consideration of the idea conceived; they turn it and re-turn it in every direction, look at it in all its aspects, place it in all manner of relations; then they penetrate it with their light, scrutinise its foundation, and examine its principal parts in succession; these begin to come out, to separate themselves from each other, to assume sharp outlines, just as in the bud the first rudimentary traces of the flower are discernible; then the other organic lines, appearing one after the other, instinct with life, or like the confused, first animate form, which little by little, declares itself in all the finish of its proportions. In like manner, the idea, in the successive stages of its formation, shows itself each day in fuller development to the mind which bears it, and which acquires assurance of its progress by persevering meditation.

There are frequently good ideas which perish in a man's understanding, abortively, whether for want of nourishment, or from the debility of the mind which, through levity, indolence, or giddiness, fails to devote a sufficient amount of reflection to what it has conceived. It is even observable that those who conceive with the greatest quickness and facility, bring forth, generally, both in thoughts and in language, the weakest and the least durable productions; whether it be that they do not take time enough to mature what they have conceived,—hurried into precocious display by the vivacity of their feelings and imagination,—or on account of the impressionability and activity of their minds, which, ever yielding to fresh emotions, exhausting themselves in too rapid an alternation of revulsions, have not the strength for patient meditations, and allow the half-formed idea or the crude thought, born without life, to escape from the understanding. Much, then, is in our own power towards the ripening and perfecting of our ideas.

Nevertheless, we must acknowledge and with humility confess,—even while conceding their full share in the result to reason and our own voluntary efforts,—a share as undeniable in this case, and perhaps more undeniable, than in any other—that there is a great deal which is not within our power in the whole of this operation, and that a man's own proper part, or merit, in the matter, is of very slight account, compared to the immense and gratuitous gifts on which he must rely. Who can give to genius, or even to talent, that marvellous understanding by which things are promptly and lucidly conceived,—that fertile and sensitive mirror of ideas which responds to the slightest objective impression, and so astonishingly reproduces all its types?

Who can give them that powerful intelligence, whose piercing glance seizes every relation, discerns every shade, traverses the whole extent of ideas? That glowing imagination which invests each conception with brilliant colouring,—that unfailing and tenacious memory which preserves unimpaired all the features of it, and reproduces them at will, either separately or together, to assist the labour of thought and meditation?

Who can give them that vigorous attention, that strong grasp of the mind, which seizes with energy and holds with perseverance before the eye of the intelligence, the object to be considered and sounded; who gives them that patience of observation, which is itself a species of genius, especially in the study of Nature?

All these rich endowments may, indeed, be developed by exercise and perfected by art; but neither exercise nor art can acquire them. And since in the order of intelligence, and of science, as in the physical world, we see nothing without the light which illumines objects, whence do these select minds get that intellectual and immaterial light, which shines upon them more abundantly than on others and enables them to discern in things and in the ideas of things what others see not? So that, according to the magnificent expression of the Royal Prophet they see the light in the light. Whence the lofty inspirations, the sudden flashings of genius, producing in it great and new ideas, so deeply and so mightily conceived, that they become by their radiation so many centres of light, so many torches of the human race? How is it that, in the presence of nature or of society, they experience such emotions and such impressions, that they see and understand what to others is all darkness and void?

We might as well ask why one soil is more fruitful than another, why the sun in a given climate is brighter, and his light more pure. The Almighty dispenses His treasures and His favours as He deems best, and this in the moral, no less than in the physical world. In this dispensation to nations or to individuals, He always has in view the manifestation of His truth, His power, and His mercy; and wherever he kindles a larger share than usual of light and fire, wherever the magnitude of His gifts is specially remarkable, there has he chosen organs of His will, witnesses of His truth, heralds of His science, representatives of His glory, and benefactors of mankind.

In this is the true secret of those wonders of power, of virtue, and of genius, who appear from time to time on earth. It is the Almighty who would make Himself known by His envoys, or would act by His instruments; and the real glory and happiness of both the last, where they are intelligent and free beings, are to co-operate with their whole strength and their whole will towards the great coming of God's kingdom upon earth, and towards the fullest possible realisation of His eternal ideas.

In this respect, the same thing is true of the works of man's mind in science, which is true of the acts of his will in the practice of beneficence. He cannot do a good action without wishing it, and he cannot wish it without the exercise of his liberty; but the inspiration of good, which induces him to choose it, and gives him the strength to accomplish it, comes not from himself. It is a gratuitous gift from the sole Giver of all that is good. It is for this reason we are told that, of ourselves, we cannot form a good resolution, nor think a good thought, nor certainly perform a good action; and, nevertheless, we will, we choose, we act freely, — for we are responsible. In like manner, we can effect nothing of ourselves in the conception and expression of our ideas. We stand in need of the life of our understanding being perpetually renewed; of the life or the impression of objects, penetrating it more or less deeply; of the light, which fertilises, engenders, fosters; in fine, of the life which surrounds minds and spirits, as well as bodies, — that moral atmosphere which calls forth, feeds, and developes whatever has motion therein. And amid all this, and along with it, is required the energetic co-operation of the spirit or mind itself, which feels, conceives, thinks, and without which nothing human can be accomplished.

Thus, then, in the order of speculation and for our mental productions, as in the moral order, and for the accomplishment of our actions, while maintaining our freewill, while exercising to the full, the activity of our intelligences, which have their own rights, lot, and part, let us lean above all upon Him who has in Him life itself, who enlightens minds and fertilises or enriches them, just as he impresses and guides hearts, and Whose virtue, is imparting itself to men, becomes the source of perfect gifts, of luminous conceptions, of great ideas, as well as of good inspirations, holy resolves, and virtuous actions.

CHAP. XIII.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE PLAN.

EVERYTHING in nature comes in its own time and at the predetermined instant. The fruit drops its seed when it is ripe and fit for reproduction, and the child is born when the hour has arrived, and when the new being is sufficiently organised to live.

It is thus with the mental production which the orator bears in his understanding. There is a moment when the idea tends to issue forth from its obscure retreat, in order to alight in the world of day, appear in the face of the sun, and there unfold itself.

Only this much difference there is, that the latter production, being intellectual, depends to a certain degree upon the freedom of the mind; that, consequently, the moment of birth is not, in it, predestinary or necessary, as in the physical order, and thus the will of the author may hasten or delay it often to the injury of the production and of its development. Premature expression (that is, when you seek to reduce to plan an idea which is not ripe, and the organisation of which is still vague) may lead to a failure, or at least to a disappointing off-shoot, incapable of life, or capable of only a sickly life—a fate which often befals youthful authors too eager to produce.

But, on the other side, too much delay in the composition of the plan, when the idea is ready and demands expression, is equally prejudicial to the work, which may wither, perish, and be even stifled in the understanding, for want of that air and light which have become indispensable to its life, and which it can derive only from being set in the open day.

There are men who experience the greatest difficulty imaginable in bringing forth their thoughts, either from a deficiency of the needful vigour to put them forward and invest them with a suitable form, or from a natural indolence which is incapable of continued efforts; like those plants which will never pierce the soil by their own unaided energy, and for which the spade must be used at the risk of destroying their tender shoots. This sluggishness, or rather incapability of producing when the time is come, is a sign of mental feebleness, of a species of impotency. It invariably betokens some signal defect in the intellectual constitution, and those who are afflicted with it will write little, will write that little with difficulty, and will never be able to speak extemporaneously in public; they will never be orators.

Nevertheless, even in him who is capable of becoming one, there is sometimes a certain inertness and laziness. We have naturally a horror of labour, and of all kinds the labour of thought is the hardest and the most troublesome; so that frequently, for no other reason than to avoid the pain which must be undergone, a person long keeps in his own head an idea, already perfectly ripe and requiring only to be put forth. He cannot bring himself to take up the pen and put his plan into shape; he procrastinates, day after day, under the futile pretext of not having read enough, not having reflected enough, and that the moment is not yet come, and that the work will gain by more prolonged studies. Then, by this unseasonable delay, the fruit languishes in the understanding from want of nourishment; falls by degrees into atrophy, loses its vital force, and dies before it is yet born. Many an excellent idea thus perishes in the germ, or is stifled in its development by the laziness or the debility of the minds which have conceived them, and which have been impotent to give them forth.

The Almighty's gift is lost through man's fault. This happens to men otherwise distinguished and gifted with rare qualities, but who dread the responsibilities of duty and the pressure of the circumstances in which they may become involved. Under pretext of preserving their freedom, but really in order to indulge their indolence, they shun the necessity of labour, with its demands and its fatigues, and thus deprive themselves of the most active stimulus of intellectual life. Given up to themselves, and fearing every external influence as a bondage, they pass their lives in conceiving without ever producing,—in reading without contributing anything of their own,—in reflecting, or rather in ruminating, without ever either writing or speaking publicly. It would have been happy for such men to have been obliged to work for a living; for, in the spur of want their mind would have found a spring which it has missed, and the necessity of subsisting by labour, or positive hunger, would have effected in them what the love of truth or of glory was not able to accomplish.

The very best thing for him who has received the gift of eloquence, and who could make an orator, is, therefore, that he should be compelled to become one. The labour of eloquence, and the labour of thinking which it presupposes, cost so much trouble and are so difficult, that save some choice characters, impelled by their genius or by ambition, nothing short of some downright necessity, physical or moral, is requisite to drive men to undertake them.

But if a man is a professor, and must deliver his lecture or instructions on some fixed day, and at an appointed hour,—or a clergyman, and is obliged to mount the pulpit at such or such a moment; or a barrister, who has to address the court at the time fixed by the judges; or member of some council or deliberative assembly, under an engagement to speak in a certain business, then, indeed, a man must be ready, on pain of failing in his duty, or of compromising his position, his reputation. On such occasions, an effort is made, laziness is shaken off, and a man strives in earnest either to fathom the question (and this is never done so well as when it is necessary to write or to speak thereon), or else to form a clearer notion of it, or, in short, to prepare the best exposition of it, with a view to producing conviction and persuasion. In this respect, we may say in the words of the Gospel, "*Blessed are the poor.*" Penury or want is the keenest spur of the mind and of the will. You are forced to bestir yourself and to draw on your inventive resources, and in youth especially, which is the most favourable time for securing instruction and acquirements, it is a great happiness to be plucked away by necessity from the enticement of pleasure, the dissipations of the world, the inactivity of supineness. There needs nothing short of this kind of compulsion, and of the fear which it inspires, to recal to reflection, meditation, and the persevering exercise of thought, a soul drawn outward by all the senses, athirst for enjoyment, and carried away by the superabundance of life (which at that age is overflowing) into the external world, there to seek for that nourishment and happiness which it will not there find. Our own entire youth was passed in that violent state, that unceasing conflict between the instinct of nature and the duty of toil. For this we know what it costs to achieve the triumph, and what most tends to ensure it.

How ought your plan to be arranged?

In order to produce or arrange it well, you must take your pen in hand. Writing is a whetstone, or flattening engine, which wonderfully stretches ideas, and brings out all their malleableness and ductility.

On some unforeseen occasion you may, without doubt, after a few moments of reflection, array suddenly the plan of your discourse, and speak appropriately and eloquently. This presupposes, in other respects, that you are well versed in your subject, and that you have in your understanding chains of thought formed by previous meditations; for it is impossible to extemporise the thoughts, at least during the whole of a discourse.

But if you have time for preparation, never undertake to speak without having put on paper the frame of what you have to say, the links of your ideas; and this for two reasons:—the first and weightiest is, that you thus possess your subject better, and accordingly you speak more closely and with less risk of digressions. The second is, that when you write down a thought you analyse it. The division of the subject becomes clear, becomes determinate, and a crowd of things which were not before perceived present themselves under the pen.

Speaking is thinking aloud, but it is more; it is thinking with method and more distinctly, so that in uttering your idea you not only make others understand it, but you understand it better yourself while spreading it out before your own eyes and unfolding it by words.

Writing adds more still to speech, giving it more precision, more fixity, more strictness, and by being forced more closely to examine what you wish to write down you extract hidden relations, you reach greater depths, wherein may be disclosed rich veins or abundant lodes.

We are able to declare that one is never fully conscious of all that is in one's own thought, except after having written it out. So long as it remains shut up in the inside of the mind, it preserves a certain haziness; one does not see it completely unfolded; and one cannot consider it on all sides, in each of its facets, in each of its bearings.

Again, while it merely flies through the air in words, it retains something vague, mobile, and indefinite. Its outlines are loosely drawn, its shape is uncertain, the expression of it is more or less precarious, and there is always something to be added or withdrawn. It is never more than a sketch. Style only gives to thought its just expression, its finished form, and perfect manifestation.

Nevertheless, beware of introducing style into the arrangement of your plan; it ought to be like an artist's draught, the sketch, which, by a few lines unintelligible to everybody save him who has traced them, decides what is to enter into the composition of the picture, and each object's place. Light and shadow, colouring and expression will come later. Or, to take another image, the plan is a skeleton, the dry bone-frame of the body, repulsive to all except the adept in anatomy, but full of interest, of meaning, and of significance for him who has studied it and who has practised dissection; for there is not a cartilage, a protuberance, or a hollow, which does not mark what that structure ought to sustain, — and therefore you have here the whole body in epitome, the entire organisation in miniature.

Hence, the moment you feel that your idea is mature, and that you are master of it in its centre and in its radiations, its main or trunk lines, take the pen and throw upon paper what you see, what you conceive in your mind. If you are young or a novice, allow the pen to have its way and the current of thought to flow on. There is always life in this first rush, and care should be taken not to check its impetus or cool its ardour. Let the volcanic lava run; it will become fixed and crystalline of itself.

Make your plan at the first heat, if you be impelled to do so, and follow your inspiration to the end; after which let things alone for a few days, or at least for several hours. Then re-read attentively what you have written, and give a new form to your plan; that is, re-write it from one end to the other, leaving only what is necessary, what is essential. Eliminate inexorably whatever is accessory or superfluous, and trace, engrave with care the leading characteristics which determine the configuration of the discourse, and contain within their demarcations the parts which are to compass it. Only take pains to have the principal features well marked, vividly brought out, and strongly connected together, in order that the division of the discourse may be clear and the links firmly welded.

CHAP. XIV.

CHARACTER OF THE PLAN.

THE essential properties of the plan are derivable from its very nature. As it is the design of the oratorical building, it ought to be drawn with neatness, distributed suitably into its compartments, in right proportions, so that at one glance, the architect or any sensible person versed in this kind of work, should perceive the aim of the construction or the idea to be realised, as well as the means for attaining it. The plan is a failure if it does not suggest to the understanding observer these things.

First.—The drawing depends on the mind, which conceives and thinks, and on the hand, which wields the pencil. A design will always bear a sure ratio to the manner of feeling, conceiving, and reproducing what is seen in nature or what is imagined, and whatever may be the dexterity of the hand, if the soul animate it not, if the understanding guide it not, it will compose nothing but images without life, and copies, exact possibly, yet void of expression. By the simplest touch, by one stroke of the brush, the whole soul may be revealed; witness that great painter who recognised his equal from a single line traced by him.

Now what advice can we give on this head? All the precepts in the world will never teach feeling or conception. We have said pretty nearly all that can be said, when speaking of the conception and formation of ideas. But what may indeed be recommended to the inexperienced orator is to confine himself in constructing his plan to the salient features of his subject, to lay down boldly the trunk lines of the discourse, omitting all filling up; to draw broadly, with hatchet-strokes, so to say, and not to set about punctuating, not to get lost in minutiæ, when the business is to mark out the main ways.

Another advice which may be given is, to leave nothing obscure, doubtful, or vague in these outlines, and to admit no feature into his sketch which does not indicate something of importance. By practice and the directions of a skilful master, he will learn to deal in those potent pencillings which express so much in so small a space; and this it is which makes extemporisation so easy and so copious, because each point of the plan becomes instinct with life, and by pressing upon it as you pass along your discourse makes it a spring gushing with luminous ideas and inexhaustible expressions.

The first etchings of the great masters are sometimes more precious in the artist's eye than their finished pictures, because they disclose the author's thoughts more unveiled, and the means he has adopted for conveying them. And in like manner the young writer will profitably study the plans of great speakers, in order to learn how to model as they did; and what will be still more improving, he will construct those plans himself from their discourses, and by a deep meditation of their masterpieces and the intellectual labour which the construction just hinted demands, he will get further into their innermost thoughts, and will better appreciate the relation between those thoughts and the magnificent embodiment of them.

Secondly.—The right distribution of your plan depends also on your manner of conceiving your subject and the end you have in view in your discourse; nor have general rules much practical range even here. What is required are, good sense, sagacity and tact; good sense to see things as they are, in their true light, or in their most favourable aspect, so as not to say what will not befit the occasion; sagacity, to turn the subject over, penetrate it through, analyse it, anatomise it, and exhibit it, first on paper, then in speaking; tact, to speak appropriately, leave in the shade whatever cannot appear without disadvantage, and bring out into strong light whatever is most in your favour; to put everything in its own place, and to do all this quickly, with neatness, clearness, simplicity, so that in the very knot of the statement of the case may be discerned all the folds and coils of the main idea about to be untied and laid forth by the discourse.

An ill-conceived, an ill-divided plan, which does not at once land the hearer right in the middle of the subject and in full possession of the matter, is rather an encumbrance than a help. It is a rickety scaffolding which will bear nothing. It but loads and disfigures the building instead of serving to raise it.

Thirdly.—Proportion and harmony in its parts contribute to the beauty of a discourse. In all things beauty is the result of variety in unity and of unity in variety. It is the necessity of oneness which assigns to each part its rank, place, and dimensions.

Frequently the exordium is too long, and the peroration interminable. There is little or nothing left for the middle; and you get a monster with an enormous head, a measureless tail, and a diminutive body. At other times it is some limb of the discourse which is lengthened until the body of the work is out of sight, the result being a shocking deformity, as when a man has long arms or legs with a dwarf's body. The main idea ought to come out in each part; the hearer ought to be always led back to it by the development of the accessory thoughts, however numerous, these having no regular vitality save by the sustained circulation through them of the former. Should they grow and dilate too much, it can only be at the cost of the parent-idea; and they must produce deformity and a sort of disease in the discourse, like those monstrous excrescences which devour the animal as when there is any irregular or excessive growth of one organ, through the abnormal congestion of the blood, thus withdrawn from the rest of the organisation.

It is chiefly when you have to extemporise that you must take the most care of your division, and of the nice allotment of all the parts of your plan; one of the disadvantages of extemporisation, and perhaps the greatest disadvantage being, diffuseness, slowness, and digressiveness, when you trust to the inspiration of the moment, excitement of speaking,—for you cannot always command the result amidst the mass of words and the distractions of the imagination.

You will obviate this danger, as far as may be, by strongly determining beforehand the proportion of the various parts; and this so clearly and so strikingly as never to lose sight of it while speaking, and thus to be constantly recalled to it, and to recall the hearer athwart the digressions, episodes, or sudden developments which may present themselves, and which are not always to be excluded; nay, sometimes amidst the emotions of sensibility or the transports of passion, into which by the torrent of extemporisation the orator may be hurried.

Let the plan of the speech, then, be traced with a firm hand, distributed with exactitude, and rightly proportioned in all its members, and then it will be an immense help to the speaker whom the suddenness and adventurousness of extemporisation invariably agitates more or less. He will then abandon himself with greater confidence to his inspirations and to the tide of words, when he feels a solid ground well known to him beneath his feet; and is aware of all its advantages and inconveniences, if he remain always mindful of the end he has in view and of the way which leads to it.

CHAP. XV.

FINAL PREPARATION BEFORE SPEAKING.

The plan of a discourse, however well put together, is still but a barren letter, or, as we have said, a species of skeleton to which flesh and vitality must be given by words. It is the discourse potentially, and has to become such actually. Now before passing from the power of acting to action, and with a view to effecting this passage, which at the very moment of executing it is always difficult, there is a last preparation not without its importance and calculated to conduce largely towards success. Thus the soldier gets ready his weapons and his resolution before the fight; thus the general makes his concluding arrangements after having fixed on his order of battle, and in order to carry it well into effect. So it is with the speaker at that supreme instant. After having fixed his ideas upon paper in a clearly defined sketch which is to him a plan of the campaign, he ought, a little while before entering the lists or battle field, to recollect himself once more in order to gather up all his energies, call forth all the powers of his soul, mind, and body for the work which he has undertaken, and hold them in the spring and direction whither they have to rush. This is the culminating point of the preparation, a critical moment which is very agitating and very painful to whoever is about to speak. We shall proceed to depict it, and to show what may then be done towards the success of a discourse, by the use of the speaker's entire means, that is, of all his intellectual, moral, and physical faculties. For the true orator speaks with his entire personality, with all the powers of his being, and for that reason, at the moment just preceding his address, he should summon, and marshal, and concentrate all his instruments.

CHAP. XVI.

FINAL INTELLECTUAL PREPARATION.

The plan is written down, but it is outside the mind, it is on paper; and although it has issued from the mind, still the linking of ideas is a thing so subtile that it easily escapes, and especially in the midst of the turmoil in which the speaker must take his stand, and which is liable to present a thousand distracting contingencies. An hour, therefore, or half an hour, or a quarter of an hour before speaking, he ought at the last moment to go over his plan again silently, review all its parts with their connexion, settle, in the most definite manner the main ideas and the order in which they occur; in a word, deeply inscribe or engrave in his imagination what is written on the paper, so as to be able to read within himself, in his own understanding, and this with certainty and without effort, the signs of what he has to say.

This is, as it were, the internal proof-copy of the external manuscript, in order that, without the help of notes, he may find the whole array of his ideas upon the living tablets of his imagination. For this purpose, he sums up that array once again, and epitomises it in a few words which perform the office at once of colours and of sign-posts — colours around which are mustered fragmentary or incidental thoughts, like soldiers around their officer, and sign-posts indicating the road to be followed in order to reach the destination without fail. Finally, by one supreme exertion of thought, he connects all these signs together in order to take in them all at a single glance in their respective places and their mutual bearings, with a view to the end which the discourse is intended to attain; just as a general acts, who, as the fight begins, looks from some height upon the ordering of his army and sees each division and regiment where he had appointed them to be. Then, after having possessed himself of the whole by means of this glance, he holds it as it were in his grasp and can hurl it into action according to the plan which he has conceived. It is easy to understand that in order to be able to do this, the plan must not only have been well conceived and well ordered, but clearly written out on paper, so that, at a moment of such pressure, a single glance may suffice to review both as a whole and in its parts.

In general, the shortest are the best plans, if they be well filled and loaded with ideas; and whenever it is practicable to reduce all the ideas to one, the various consequences of which are thus derivatively commanded, nothing can be so convenient or so sure.

This accounts for the fact that one may sometimes speak wonderfully well without so much preparation, and produce a very great effect. All that is required is one idea, of which the speaker is deeply convinced and the consequences and applications of which he clearly discerns, or else some lively and heart-stirring sentiment; and then the light of the idea or the emotion of the feeling bursts forth into words like the pent-up torrent of a reservoir through a fissure in the dam; but the water-shed must have been full, and the plenteousness of the inundation supposes protracted toil for the previous collection. It is thus with the most prompt and copious extemporisations; they are invariably the reservoir of ideas and feelings, prepared and accumulated with time, and rushing forth in a discourse.

In all cases, what is of the first importance is to see all the ideas in a single idea, in order to keep up the unity of the subject, amidst variety of exposition and the multiplicity of representations; for in this consists the fine ordering of a speech. Once sure of the leading idea, the divisions and sub-divisions must be rapidly inspected. You must proceed from one to the other reflectively in order to test what they will be worth at the decisive instant, and to penetrate them by a last glance of the mind,—a glance which is never more vigorous or more piercing than at that important moment. You must act like the general who passes among the ranks before the signal is given, and who assures himself by the mien of his troops that they will behave well, while he excites their courage by words of fire, and pours fresh spirit and boldness into their hearts. He too has his picked troops on whom he relies more than on the rest, and these picked troops are to act at the crisis of the fight. He keeps them in reserve to decide the victory, and he is aware beforehand of all the power with which they furnish him.

So, among the various thoughts which make up a discourse; and in their array, there are some better calculated than the others to strike the imagination and to move the soul: some stirring picture, some unusually interesting narrative, some convincing proof, some motive which will carry away the hearer's decision; and the like. The orator, during his final preparation, distinguishes and places in reserve these resources. He arranges them appropriately so as to bring them in at such a part of his discourse; and without fully fathoming them before it is time, he keeps them under his eye, well knowing that here are wells of living water which shall gush forth when he desires it, at a touch of the sounding rod. Upon such means the success of a speech generally turns, as the winning of a battle upon a charge opportunely made.

Only care must be taken not to confound these reserves of *idea*, these well husbanded resources, with what are called hits of eloquence or effective phrases. These last devices which sometimes fling a brilliant radiance over a speech by a semblance of originality, by eccentric perceptions, by far-fetched approximations, and above all by strangeness of expression, run the risk almost invariably of sacrificing sense to sound, substance to form, and of superseding depth of thought and warmth of feeling by sound of words and an exaggerated oratorical delivery. You get to aim at effect, that is, at astonishing your hearers and making them admire you; you therefore use every means of dazzling and confounding them, which is nearly always done at the expense of your subject's truthfulness and of your own dignity. Besides, as you cannot extemporise these effective phrases, because the effect depends on a certain combination of words very difficult to arrange and spoilt if a single word be amiss, you have to compose these phrases beforehand, learn them by heart and know them literally; and even then you have still to get them into your discourse and to prepare their admission, in order that they may make a brilliant appearance and produce the wished-for effect. The consequence is that you convey them from a greater or a smaller distance with more or less artifice and disguise, so that a part of the exposition is devoted to clearing the way for them, and to marshalling their entry on the boards—a process which necessarily entails fillings-up, gaps, and lengthiness of various passages respectively. And, indeed, these brilliant hits which discharge a great amount of sparks, and a small amount of either light or heat, are for the most part purchased at the price of the truthfulness as well as the interest of the discourse. It is a fire-work display which dazzles and charms for a moment, only to plunge you in thick darkness again.

This is not a genuine nor moving eloquence; it is the parody of eloquence and a mere parade of words; if I may dare to say so, a sort of oratorical charlatanry. Woe to the speaker who makes use of such means! He will speedily exhaust himself by the mental efforts to find out new effects, and his addresses, aiming at the sublime and the extraordinary, will become often ludicrous, always impotent.

Nor must you rely on the notes which you may carry in your hand to help you in the exposition and save you from breaking down. Doubtless, they may have their utility, especially in business speaking, as at the bar, at the council board, or in a deliberative assembly. Sometimes they are even necessary to remember facts or to state figures. They are the material part, the baggage of the orator, and he should lighten them and disencumber himself of their burden, to the utmost of his power. In truth, on the very occasions when it should seem you would have most need of them, they are totally worthless. In the most fervid moments of extemporaneous speaking, when light teems, and the sacred fire burns, when the mind is hurried along upon the tide of thoughts, and the tongue, obedient, to its impulse, accommodates itself in a wonderful manner to its operations and lavishes the treasures of expression, everything should proceed from within. The mind's glance is bent inwards, absorbed by the subject and its ideas; you distinguish none of the external objects, and you can no longer even read your notes on the paper. You see the lines without understanding them, and they become an embarrassment instead of a help. Nothing so thoroughly freezes the oratorical flow as to consult those wretched notes. Nothing is so inimical to the prestige of eloquence; it forthwith brings down to the common earth both the speaker and his audience.

Try then, when you have to speak, to carry all things in yourself, like Bias the philosopher, and after having, to the best of your ability, conscientiously prepared, allow yourself, filled with your subject, to be borne along by the current of your ideas and the tide of words, and above all by the Spirit from on High who enlightens and inspires. He who cannot speak except with notes, knows not how to speak, and knows not even what speaking is; just as the man of lore who is so only with his books around him, is not so truly, and knows not even what learning is.

In fine, you must distrust all methods of mnemonics or artificial memory, intended to localise and to fagot together in your imagination the different parts of your address. Cicero and Quintilian recommend them, I think, in moderation; be it so, but let it be in the strictest possible moderation. For it is putting the mechanism of form in the stead of the organisation of thoughts,—substituting arbitrary and conventional links for the natural association of ideas; at the very least, it is introducing into the head an apparatus of signs, forms, or images which are to serve as a support to the discourse, and which must needs burden, obscure, and hamper the march of it.

If your address be the expression of an idea fraught with life, it will develope itself naturally, as plants germinate, as animals grow, through the sustained action of a vital force, by an incessant organic operation, by the effusion of a living principle. It ought to issue from the depths of the soul, as the stream from its spring—*ex abundantia cordis os loquitur*, "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh."

But a heart there must be; and in that heart a fulness of feeling, manifesting itself by a plenitude of ideas, which will give in its turn plenitude of expression. The mouth speaks with ease when the heart is full; but if it is empty, the head takes its office, and it is the head which has recourse to these artificial means, for want of the inspiration which fails it. It is the resource of rhetoricians.

CHAP. XVII.

FINAL MORAL PREPARATION.

When you at last are in possession of your plan, and have engraved it upon your understanding, in the manner we have just said, you must try to remain calm and collected. This is not always so easy, on account of the place where you have to speak, at the bar, for instance, or in a public scene, or a deliberative assembly. You are not in such cases free to choose your own moment, and you have to be ready for the occasion. You may have to wait long for your turn, and till then there occur unavoidable distractions, from which you must keep yourself safe. If the will reject them, the mind remains self-possessed, and may even preserve its collectedness amidst the most varied scenes, which indeed may touch the senses, without disturbing the mind.

But if you have it in your power to remain in solitude until the moment for speaking, as generally happens to the preacher and the lecturer, it is well to avoid all external excitement which might change the current of the thoughts, and drive your attention into another channel. You should then take refuge within the depth of yourself, as in a sanctuary where the Almighty has designed to manifest Himself since your object in speaking is but to announce the truth, and the Almighty is Truth itself.

I do not speak here of those men who discourse solely in the interests of passion or of party, and whose object is not the triumph of what is true, but merely the gain of some success, some advantage, conducive to their ambition, their pride, or their avarice. These men will never be orators in the proper sense of the word—*vir bonus dicendi peritus*; for language ought not to be used except in the interests of truth—to employ it for any other end is to make of it a commodity or a traffic.

If in the stage which we are depicting, the soul of him who is about to speak be liable to feel variously affected, according to the variety of character, predisposition, and momentary state, sometimes, after the final preparation is over, it perceives that it possesses its subject, that it is master of it, so far as this may be, and it then experiences a certain sense of security which is not without sweetness. A mind in this state need think no more of anything, but may remain passive and repose itself ere proceeding to action. It has sometimes happened to myself to fall asleep while awaiting the summons to the pulpit, to lose consciousness, at least, and to awake refreshed.

At other times, and indeed more frequently, a man is restless and agitated. The chest is weighted with a heavy burden which checks the breathing, makes the limbs sore, and oppresses all the faculties of mind and body. This is an extremely painful state, especially if a man has to speak on a grave occasion, on a solemn day, and in the Christian pulpit. One is conscious then that there is a divine duty to be discharged, and there is a fear of proving unfaithful or unequal to it; one feels the full weight of responsibility before God. It is a truly agonising sensation, in which several feelings are blended, and which it may not be useless to analyse, in order to distinguish what it comprises that is legitimate, that is advantageous to an orator, and, on the contrary, what is amiss in it and liable to do him harm.

In the first place, it is to be noted that this fright, experienced by him who is on the point of speaking, is salutary, at least to a certain extent. It is evident that if it goes to the length of paralysing the orator, or of impairing the use of his means, it is inconvenient and fatal. But those whom it is able thus to crush, will never be capable of speaking in public, as we have already observed in the case of two celebrated writers, admirable for their style and powerless in harangue.

Woe to him who experiences no fear before speaking in public! It shows him to be unconscious of the importance of the function which he is about to discharge,—that he does not understand what truth is, whose apostle he himself should be, or that he little cares, and that he is not animated by that sacred fire which comes down from heaven to burn in the soul. I except altogether the Prophets, the Apostles of Jesus Christ, all who speak under supernatural inspiration, and who have been told that they must not prepare what they shall say when they shall stand before the powerful and the arbiters of the world, for that all they should say shall be given to them at the time itself.

It is not for men like these that we write. The Almighty, whose instruments they are, and who fills them with His Spirit, makes them act and speak as He pleases, and to them the resources of human experience are entirely unnecessary. They never are afraid, because He who is truth and light is with them, and speaks by them. But others are not afraid because their enlightenment is small and their self-assurance great. They are unconscious of the sacredness of their task and of their ministry, and they go forward like children who, knowing not what they do, play with some terrible weapon, and with danger itself. The most valiant troops always feel some emotion at the first cannon shot, and I have heard it stated that one of the most celebrated generals of the empire,—who was even called "the bravest of the brave," was always obliged to dismount from his horse at that solemn moment; after which he rushed like a lion into the battle.

Braggarts, on the contrary, are full of assurance before the engagement, and give way during the action.

So is it with those fine talkers, who think themselves competent to undertake any subject and to face any audience, and who, in the excellent opinion which they entertain of themselves, do not even think of making any serious preparation. After a few phrases uttered with confidence, they hesitate, they break down, or if they have sufficient audacity to push forward amidst the confusion of their thoughts and the incoherency of their discourse, they twaddle without understanding their own words, and drench their audience with their inexhaustible volubility.

It is well then to feel somewhat afraid ere speaking, first in order that you may not lightly expose yourself to the trial, and that you may be spared the mortification; and, in the second place, still more particularly, if you are obliged to speak, in order that you may maturely consider what you should say, seriously study your subject, penetrate it, become master of it, and thus be able to speak usefully to a public audience.

The fear in question is also useful in making the speaker feel his want of help from above, such as shall give him the adequate light, strength, and vividness of life. All men who have experience in public speaking, and who have ever themselves been eloquent, know how much they have owed to the inspiration of the moment, and to that mysterious power which gives it. It is precisely because a man may have sometimes received this efficacy from above, rendering him superior to himself, that he dreads being reduced to his own strength in that critical situation, and so to prove beneath the task which he has to accomplish.

This fear which agitates the soul of a person about to speak, has also another and a less noble cause, which unfortunately prevails in the majority of instances; that is, self-love,—vanity, which dreads falling below oneself and below the expectations of men,—a desire of success and of applause. Public speaking is a singularly conspicuous sort of thing, exposing a person to all manner of observations. Doubtless there is no harm in seeking the esteem of one's fellows, and the love of a good reputation is an honourable motive of action, capable of producing excellent effects. But carried too far, it becomes a love of glory, a passion to make a dazzling appearance, and to cause oneself to become the theme of talk,—and then, like all other passions, it is ready to sacrifice truth, justice, and good to its own gratification or success.

Nothing can be better than that the orator should endeavour to please and satisfy his audience; that desire will impel him to noble exertions and the exercise of all his means; but that, while actually speaking, such an end should engross him above everything else, and that the care of his own glory should agitate him more than any love of the truths which he has to announce, or of the souls of the hearers whom he should enlighten and edify,—this, I say, is a gross abuse, a perversion of the talent and of the ministry intrusted to him by Providence, and sooner or later will bring him to grief. This inordinate attention to himself and his success agitates, disturbs, and makes him unhappy,—too often inciting him to exaggerations for the sake of effect. In taking from him simplicity it takes his right sense, his tact, his good taste, and he becomes displeasing by dint of striving to please.

Yet far from us be the idea of condemning a love of glory in the orator, and especially in the lay orator. While still young a man needs this spur, which sometimes produces prodigies of talent and of labour; and it may safely be affirmed that a very great progress must have been made in wisdom and perfection to dispense with it altogether. Even where it ought to have the least influence, it still too often has sway, and the minister of the holy Word, who ought to be inspired by the Spirit from on High, and to refer exclusively to God all that he may do, has much difficulty in preserving himself indifferent to the praises of men, seeking these praises only too often, and thus making self, almost unconsciously, the end of his speaking and of his success. In such a case the movements of nature and of grace get mingled in his heart, and it is hard to distinguish and separate them. This is the reason why so many deceive themselves, and why piety itself has its illusions.

If it is good to entertain some fear before speaking, it would nevertheless be prejudicial to entertain too much: first, because a great fear disturbs the power of expression; and secondly, because if it does not proceed from timidity of character, it often springs from excessive self-love, from too violent an attachment to praise, or from the passion of glory, which overcomes the love of truth. Here is that which one should try to combat and to abate in oneself. The real orator should have but what is true in view; he should blot himself out in presence of the truth and make it alone appear, — as happens naturally, spontaneously, whenever he is profoundly impressed by it, and identifies himself with it, heart and mind. Then he grows like it, great, mighty, and dazzling. It is no longer he who lives, it is the truth which in him lives and acts; his language is truly inspired; the man vanishes in the virtue of the Almighty who manifests himself by His organ,—and this is the speaker's noblest, his true glory. Then are wrought the miracles of eloquence which turn men's wills and change their souls. Such is the end at which the Christian orator should aim. He should try to dwarf himself, to annihilate himself, as it were, in his discourse, in order to allow Him whose minister he is, to speak and to work,—a result oftenest attained when the speaker thinks he has done nothing, on account of his too fervent and too natural desire to do a great deal.

Oh, you who have taken the Lord for your inheritance, and who prefer the light and service of Heaven to all the honours and all the works of earth,—you, particularly, who are called to the Apostleship, and who glow with the desire to announce to men the word of God! remember that here, more than anywhere else, virtue consists in disinterestedness, and power in abnegation of self. Endeavor to see in the triumphs of eloquence, if they be granted you one thing only,—the glory of God. If you have the gift of touching the souls of others, seek one thing only,—to bring them, or bring them back, to God. For this end repress, stifle within your heart, the natural movements of pride, which, since the days of sin, would attribute all things to itself, even the most manifest and the most precious gifts; and each time that you have to convey to the people the Word of Heaven, ask urgently of God the grace to forget yourself, and to think of Him and of Him only.

CHAP. XVIII.

BODILY PREPARATION.

THE body also requires to be prepared in a certain manner before an harangue. It should be subjected to a sort of magnetism, as the phrase runs in these days; and the orator who knows the difficulties and the resources of his art will take very good care not to undertake a speech, unless he is compelled by circumstances to do so, without making his arrangements in this respect too.

Let it not be forgotten that the body plays its part in all that we do, even in the most abstract thoughts and the most exquisite feelings. We are not angels, and the human soul cannot act here below without the co-operation of the organisation to which it is united, and which forms an essential part of its personality. The *Ego*, in truth, is applicable to the functions of the body no less than to those of the mind. A man says: "*I* walk, *I* eat, *I* digest," as he says, "I think, I wish, I love;" and although the organs have an inferior office in human actions, yet that office is sufficiently considerable for the organs to promote or to impede those actions in a signal manner. The body then should be well disposed in order that the intellectual and moral functions may be properly performed, and that they may not experience a hindrance where they ought to find an assistance. In the first place, the general state of the health ought to be good, or at least tolerable, in order that the thinking power may enjoy instruments ready to receive its impulses, and the will be able easily to set them in motion.

A man speaks with difficulty when suffering. Life is then checked, and, so to say, absorbed by the organs, which diverts it from intellectual action, or at least weakens its activity in that respect. One may, doubtless, by an effort of the will, excited by circumstances, do violence to the rebellion or inertness of the body, and hurl it into action,—but never without great fatigue, an exhaustion of one's strength, and, later, its indisposition and its decay entail a painful reaction after this unseasonable soaring, so that the higher the previous elevation, the deeper the subsequent fall. Now the orator ought to spare a servant so necessary to him, just as an accomplished rider treats the generous steed whom he might ruin on a single occasion by over urging him.

The orator should have a strong constitution; he should have a sound head, a good digestion, and, above all, a robust chest, for nothing is so fatiguing or so exhausting as declamation when long continued. I speak of oratorical declamation, which brings simultaneously into action the whole person, moral and physical,—the head, all the economy of which is strained to the uttermost by extemporisation; the lungs, which inhale and respire with violence, frequently with a shock and a gulp, according to the discourse; the larynx which is expanded and contracted precipitately; the nervous system which is wound up to the highest degree of sensibility; the muscular system which is keenly agitated by the oratorical stage-play from the sole of the foot to the tips of the fingers; and, finally, the blood which warms, boils, makes heart and arteries beat with quick strokes, and shoots fire through the whole organisation, till the humours of the body evaporate and stream in drops of perspiration along the surface of the skin. Judge from this whether, in order to bear such fatigue, health and vigour be required.

Nevertheless, there is an illusion against which you must be on your guard; it is that of thinking yourself ill when you have to speak in public, and to mistake for inability the often very sensible indisposition which you experience when called upon for a discourse, either through the indolence which is deterred by labour and fatigue, or on account of the extreme emotion which is felt at the thought of appearing in public, an emotion which produces on the body, and on the bowels especially, an effect reacting all over you. Your arms and legs hang dead, you can hardly drag yourself along, or even stand upright. There is an oppression of the respiration, a weight on the chest, and a man experiences, in a fashion sometimes very burdensome, what was felt by the bravest of the brave at the first cannon-shot. Many a time do I remember having found myself in this state at the moment for mounting the pulpit and while waiting for my summons. Could I have only fled away without shame, most assuredly I should have made off, and I envied the lot of those poor creatures who think of nothing or of no great matter, and who know not these agonies and lacerations.

They who have not the strength to overcome these temptations and discouragements will never know how to speak. They will not even have the courage to expose themselves to such trials, I may as well say it, they amount occasionally to such a torture that a man involuntarily compares himself to a convict dragged to the gallows. Those who have known this state and triumphed over it are aware that I do not exaggerate.

Strange! It proves the contradictions which exist in man as he is, whose original constitution has been overthrown by sin which has set in opposition to each other, in one and the same person, the various elements which ought to harmonise in the unity of a single life. You wish and you do not wish simultaneously; body is at war with the mind, and their laws come into collision and into conflict. The soul, enlightened by divine truth, touched by charity, transported by the Spirit of God, or by the love of glory, desires to proclaim what it sees, knows, believes, feels, even in the teeth of contradiction, and at the cost of the greatest fatigue, nay, sometimes of the sharpest sufferings; but the body, like some unbroken beast, refuses to the utmost of its power, and you cannot get it along save with a bloody spur. It resists with all its might, takes every opportunity of evasion, every opportunity to shake off the reins which rule it and control its movements. A man of spirit would afterwards be inconsolable that he should have shrunk at the moment of appearing in public, if duty obliges him like a soldier, for having wavered at the beginning of the action; and yet, in the former case, I can bear witness, and perhaps in the latter,—I know it not,—a man would, a hundred times over, surrender his task ere undertaking it,—if he dared.

I know but one effectual remedy for this fear,—the remedy I have already indicated; it is never to mount platform or pulpit, save on the call of conscience alone,—to fulfil a duty, and to put aside whatever is merely personal,—glory, reputation, public opinion,—whatever relates to self. A man then goes forward as a victim of duty, resigned to the sacrifice, and seeking only the glory of Him to whom the sacrifice is offered. You never succeed better than under these conditions, and everybody is a gainer; the speaker, in calmness, dignity, and simplicity,—the audience, in a loftier and more penetrating address, because it is untainted by selfishness and almost above what is merely human.

Some persons calculate upon giving themselves courage by stimulating drinks or by a generous nourishment. A strange sort of courage that! In war, where physical force predominates, I can conceive such a thing,—and it is a resource not to be disdained before a battle; but as our business is a battle of eloquence, that is of the subtilest, most intelligent, and most mental element that can be imagined, there is need of another spirit rather than the spirit of alcohol or of wine to stimulate the faculties and warm the heart. Orators who have recourse to such means in order to become capable of moving their hearers, will never get beyond the sphere of the imagination and of the senses, and if they ever have any eloquence, it will be that of the clubs, the taproom, and the crossroads,—an eloquence which has a power of its own, but in the interest of evil passions.

Finally, in a physical respect, there are precautions to be taken, relatively to such and such an organ which, from its habitual weakness, or its irritated state may need repose or strengthening. In this, each person must manage according to his temperament, constitution, and habits. Some are unable to speak fasting, and no wonder; for it is indispensable to be well supported against a fatigue so great. The voice is weakened, broken by inanition or an empty stomach.

Others, again, cannot speak after a meal, and this too is intelligible; because the labour of thinking draws the blood to the head, and defrauds the stomach of it, thus stopping digestion,—so that the blood throbs violently in the head and produces giddiness. As in all other earthly cases, the right course here is the middle course. You should have had nourishment, but in moderation; and you should not speak, except before digestion has begun its labour, or else after it has so far proceeded as not to be any longer liable to be arrested.

Every one must settle his own regimen of health in this matter, and nobody can know what will agree with him so well as the speaker himself. He will therefore do as did the athletes of old, who underwent a most rigorous discipline in order that they might be masters of their whole strength at the moment of conflict; and if they had this resolution who contend in mere bodily strifes, and for perishable garlands, what ought not the wrestlers of eloquence to undergo, whom the Almighty calls to the battles of intelligence, to the proclamation and the defence of truth, of justice, of excellence, of the noblest of things of both heaven and earth, and to a share in their deathless glory!

CHAP. XIX.

THE DISCOURSE.

We have said how the orator should prepare in mind, heart, and even body, for the great work of addressing others; let us now follow him to his field of action at the moment when he is about to establish truth, or combat error with the sword of eloquence. This is the solemn moment of battle.

For the sake of greater clearness we will divide this consideration into six points, and arrange under that number of heads all that we have to say that may be the most useful. We do not aim in this laying down any inviolable order, but merely at having a frame to unite and connect our remarks, our reflections, and the results of our experience; for we must here repeat that we have had no intention of writing a treatise on the oratorical art; our object being merely to give an account to others of what we have done ourselves, and of how we have done it.

We shall speak serially: first, of the beginning of the discourse, or exordium; secondly, of the entry upon the subject, or start; thirdly, of the realization of the plan, or the exposition and the progression of the ideas; fourthly, of the supreme (all decisive) moment of the discourse; fifthly, of the peroration; sixthly, of oratorical action.

CHAP. XX.

THE BEGINNING OR EXORDIUM.

I TERM the beginning everything which the orator utters from the moment he opens his mouth to the moment when he not merely shows the object of his discourse, but enters into and developes his subject. "What I know best is my opening," says the confidant in the comedy of the "*Plaideurs.*" This is true of him who recites a written discourse; it is not true of him who extemporises. His opening is that which he knows worst, because he is not yet under weigh and he has to get so.

I am well aware that it is in one's power to write one's exordium and learn it by heart. It is a useful practice in certain cases, and for persons who have the habit of blending written with extemporary passages, and of stepping alternately from what they have learnt by heart to what they unfold that very instant from their minds. There are speakers who go through this process remarkably well, and who contrive to produce an effect chiefly by declamation prepared beforehand. I do not blame them for it. The art of speaking is so difficult that you must do in each position what you can, and all is well that ends well. Besides, as in every applied theory, the art must be made to fit the talents of each practitioner. Minds are so various, that what suits one does not suit another,—so that here no absolute laws exist.

Nevertheless I believe I may assert that the true orator,—that is, he who does not recite, but who speaks,—is not inclined to employ this process, and hardly finds it answer when he has recourse to it. The very most he can do is to prepare his first sentence, and if he tries to learn a whole exordium he generally entangles himself, gets confused, and fares worse than if he had spoken. Even in his exordium he needs the freedom of his paces;—the one thing indispensable is to keep well before his mind the exact enunciation of his subject, and as rigorous and simple a formula as possible of the idea which he has to exhibit. Here should be no vagueness nor obscurity, but a clear intuition and an unhesitating expression. It is in this that the majority of would-be extemporisers fail, because, for want of reflection and meditation, they know clearly neither the object of their discourse nor the way to treat it. They perceive it in the gross or approximately, and thereupon they utter common-places, empty generalities, and turn continually around and about their subject, without ever once going into it.

Those who speak are in quite a different position at starting from that of persons who recite. They are generally weak and rather obscure in the opening, whereas the others appear strong and brilliant. But it is the same with whatever has life in nature. Life always opens by an obscure point, hardly perceptible, and proceeds from darkness to light. According to Genesis, all things were created from night to morning. But life grows and assumes organisation little by little, and finally it blooms into all its magnificence. So with the spoken address, which is a something endued with life, it is born, it grows, it assumes organisation in the hearer's presence.

For this reason, the speaker ought to begin softly, modestly, and without any pompous announcement of what is to follow. The grain of mustard-seed, which is the smallest of seeds, produces a great tree in which the birds of heaven come and take shelter.

The exordium of an extemporaneous discourse ought to be the simplest thing in the world. Its principal use is in laying the subject well down and in giving a glimpse of the idea which has to be developed.

Unquestionably, if circumstances require it, you may also introduce certain oratorical precautions,—insinuations, commendations, and a delicate and supple mind always finds a way to insert these things. But, generally they clog that mind, because they are outside of its idea and may divert it from the idea; and as the expressions are not ready made, the mind runs a risk of being carried away from its subject at the first start, and of missing its plan.

For the same reason, the speaker's voice will be moderate, nay a little weak at first, and it may happen, at least in a vast audience, that his first expressions are not heard, or are heard ill. This is of course an inconvenience, but it cannot be helped, and it is not without its advantages.

It cannot be helped, or can scarcely be so, because as he who extemporises carries all his ideas in his brain, and is never quite sure of his language, he always gets into the pulpit or upon the platform in a state of deep emotion. Now it is out of the question to bawl when in that state, and it is the most one can do to find voice at all; the mouth is dry, the tongue cleaves to the palate,—"*vox faucibus hæret*,"—and one can hardly articulate.

Besides, should the orator force his voice in the beginning, it will be presently rendered hoarse, broken, exhausted, and it will fail him before a quarter of an hour. You must speak neither too loudly nor too fast at first; or else the violent and rapid expansions and contractions of the larynx force it and falsify it. You must husband your voice at starting in order that it may last and maintain itself to the end. When you gradually strengthen and animate it, it does not give way,—it remains clear, strong, and pleasing to the close of your harangue. Now this is a very important particular for speaker and for hearers; for the former, because he keeps sound and powerful the instrument without which he can do nothing; for the latter, because nothing tires them more than hoarse, obstreperous, and ill-articulated sounds.

The inconvenience in question has the further advantage of establishing silence among the audience, especially if it is considerable and diffused over a vast space, as in churches. At the beginning of a sermon, there is always noise; people taking their places, chairs or benches turning, coughs, pocket-handkerchiefs, murmurs, a hubbub more or less protracted, which is unavoidable in a large assembly of persons settling themselves. But if you speak low, softly, and the audience sees you speak, without hearing you, it will make haste to be still that it may listen, and all ears will be directed more eagerly towards the pulpit. In general, men esteem only what they have not, or what they dread losing, and the words which they fear they shall not be able to catch, become more valuable.

For the same reason, again, the bearing of the extemporaneous speaker is modest and even somewhat abashed, as he presents himself in the pulpit, or on the platform; for he almost invariably mounts thither as to the place of torture, so full is he of anguish, so heavy feels the burden of speaking. Nevertheless, he must beware of allowing his agitation to be too apparent, and above all of affecting the victim. For the rest, if he be a true orator, his countenance, as well as interior feelings, will soon change. He will hardly have pronounced a few sentences ere all his confusion will vanish, the mind will assert its superiority and sway the body. Once face to face, and at grappling point with his idea, he will forget everything else. He will no longer see anything save the thought which he has to manifest, the feeling of his heart which he has to communicate. His voice, which just now was so tremulous and broken, will acquire assurance, authority, brilliancy; if he is rightly inspired that day, if light from on high beams in his intelligence and warms his soul, his eyes will shoot lightning, and his voice the thunderbolt; his countenance will shine like the sun, and the weakness of humanity will undergo its transfiguration. He will stand on the Mount Tabor of eloquence.

CHAP. XXI.

ENTRANCE INTO THE SUBJECT.

After the exordium, which should clearly and briefly lay down the theme of the discourse, as well as its division, if there is occasion, the business must be entered upon and the development begun.

This is perhaps the hardest part of extemporaneous speaking, and that in which it offers most disadvantages. The point is to get out of harm, and there is but a narrow passage which it is easy to miss. A favourable wind is necessary to waft you into the open sea. Many are wrecked in this passage, and know not how to get out into the open sea of their subject.

In writing you have time for reflection, and can arrange at leisure the sequence of your ideas. Nevertheless, everybody knows what trouble this arrangement often costs, and how great the perplexity is in catching the exact thread of unravelment, and in distinguishing amidst several ideas that which commands the rest and will open a way for them, as a principle has its consequences and a cause its effects. Sometimes whole hours are consumed in seeking the end of the chain, so as to unroll it suitably, and too often, as when trying to disentangle a skein of thread, you proceed awkwardly and you complicate, instead of unravelling. This is one of the chief annoyances of those who want to write, especially in the period of impatient, fancy-ridden youth, when one readily mistakes whatever glitters or produces effect, for the main point and the thing essential. A rare sagacity, or else much reflection and matureness are requisite to catch, at the first glance, the true serial connexion of ideas, and to put everything in its right place, without groping and without unsuccessful trials.

What then, if you must decide on the spot, without hesitation, without being able "to try," before an audience, which has its eyes riveted upon you, its ears intent, and its expectation eagerly awaiting the words that are to fall from your lips? The slightest delay is out of the question, and you must rush into the arena, often but half accoutred or ill armed. The moment is come, you must begin to speak, even though you do not exactly know what you are going to say, nor whether what you shall say will lead precisely to the passage which leads into the open sea. There is here a critical instant for the orator, an instant which will decide the fate of his discourse.

No doubt he has prepared the sequence of his thoughts, and he is in possession of his plan. But this plan comprises only the leading ideas stationed widely apart, and in order to reach the first station from the starting point, there is a rush to make and an aim to take, and therein lies the difficulty. The best way is to go with resolution straight to the heart of your subject, the main idea, and to disembowel it, so to speak, in order to get forth its entrails and lay them out. But a man has not always the courage and the strength; besides which, he is afraid of being deficient in materials if he makes short work with his exposition, and thus of breaking down after a while, without having filled up the time assigned or run his due course. This is a common illusion among beginners. They are always in dread of wanting sufficient materials, and either in their plan, or in their discourse, they heap up all manner of things, and end by being lengthy, diffuse, and confused. A man is never short of materials, when he is in the true line of his development. But he must strike the rock with the rod of Moses, and above all he must strike it as God has commanded in order that the waters may gush from it in an exhaustible stream. When the miner has touched the right lode, wealth abounds.

Unfortunately, things do not always happen thus. Too often one takes the first path that offers to reach the main idea, and that path is not always the straightest nor the clearest. Once in the way, with eyes bent towards the point of destination, a man plies, not indeed the oars, but words, in order to attain the idea, and he attains it only by circuitous and tortuous efforts. The hearer who is following you does not very well see whither you are leading him, and if this position continues for a little longer, the discomfort of the speaker gains upon the listeners, and a coldness is diffused with the uneasiness among the assembly.

Have you at times contemplated from the

shore a white sail striving to leave the roadstead, and by the wind's help to gain the offing? It tacks in all directions, to gain its object, and when baulked, it flutters inwards and oscillates without advancing, until at last the favourable breeze distends it, and then it passes swiftly over the waters, enters upon the open sea, and speedily vanishes below the horizon. Thus it is with the orator who misses his right course in the first instance. Eager to set out, because it would be discreditable to stand still, he hoists his sail to the first wind that blows, and presently back it sinks with the deceitful breeze. He tries another course with as poor success, and runs the risk of either not advancing or of taking a wrong line. He then makes for the first image that presents itself, and it beguiles him far from his subject. He would fain return, but no longer knows his way. He sees his goal afar, eluding him, as Ithaca escaped Ulysses, and like Ulysses he may complete a very long Odyssey ere reaching it. Perhaps he will never get thither, and that is sadder still.

There are persons who speak for a whole hour, within sight of their subject, and yet cannot manage to enter it. Sometimes, again, they get at it when they ought to be taking leave of it—that is when their time is exhausted. Hence interminable orations which tire the hearer without either instructing or moving him; the orator wears himself out in utter futility, and his toil is fruitless. He has plunged into a quagmire; the more he struggles, the deeper he sinks; he flounders right and left to find his road and recover solid ground, and if he gains it, it is covered all over with the mud through which he has waded.

Horace says—"*qui bene cœpit, facti dimidium habet,*" "he who has begun well, has half done his work." This is perfectly applicable to the orator, who has well got into his matter, and who, after having clearly laid down his subject, attacks it full front, and takes up understandingly the thread of his ideas. He has then nothing to do but to suffer his skiff to float along; the very current will carry it on to the destination, and the strokes of his oars, and the breeze in his sails, will be so many accessorial means of propulsion. But if he is out of the current, and still more, if he is against the current, should the breeze fail him or prove adverse, the more he rows the less he advances.

He will lose time and trouble, and fill with uneasiness or with pity those who watch him from the shore.

But how begin well? How find this thread of the deep water, this favourable current, or, to speak without metaphor, the leading idea by which a man should open, and which will bring after it the others? Can a precept be given, a method prescribed for this end? No precept, no method, avails anything, except in so far as one knows how to apply them; and in order to understand them rightly, and above all, in order to make use of them successfully, what we need is good sense, intelligence, and an unwarped, piercing mind. A man should be able to discern rapidly what is to be done in the case which we have just described,—he must know how to take advantage of the rising breeze which can help him, and how to extricate himself from the embarrassment in which he is involved. There is need, in short, for the orator, as for any other person who has to face a danger or escape from a disadvantage, of both mind and presence of mind; — things not to be taught.

CHAP. XXII.

THE DEVELOPMENT.

THE speaker should have his plan well fixed, not only on paper, but in his head, so as to keep ever present before his mind the chain of the thoughts, and so as to proceed successively from one to the other in the prescribed order of the exposition. The discourse, then, is mounted, as it were, in a frame from which it ought not to slip, under pain of digressing and diverting, by its deviations, the attention of the hearers from the subject, as a river which overflows its bed sweeps away whatever it meets, and spreads dearth and ruin where it ought to have diffused refreshment and fertility.

Or to speak more properly, the discourse which thus overflows carries nothing at all with it except those wordy waves which beat upon the ears without leaving behind them a single idea or moving a single feeling. Many of those who are anxious to speak extemporaneously, and who do not understand it, for want of talent or of preparation, are lost in this manner. The current of their discourse, which is not kept within its banks, gets every moment divided and loses itself in emptiness, like those rivers with a multiplicity of mouths, which are absorbed by the sands.

It is a highly important matter, then, to know how to confine oneself to one's plan,—although one must not be such a slave to it, as to leave no room for the new thoughts which may occur at the moment. That would be to deprive oneself of one of the chief advantages of extemporisation,—the inspiration of the moment and the life it gives to the discourse.

A man who is accustomed to speak in public even foresees to a certain extent,—or rather he has a presentiment in the matter not indeed of the instant at which he will have this inspiration, but of the ideas which may offer themselves in certain stages of the development; he catches sight of what is involved in an idea which he has yet only indicated. It is like a plunge of the sounding rod, dropped beforehand into a spring, and he carefully recloses it until he shall require to uncover it and make it gush forth. He would weaken, and perhaps exhaust it, were he to pierce it during the preparatory portion; he reserves it for the favourable moment, sure to find there a plentiful well when he pleases.

But every advantage has its drawback. In the warmth of exposition a man is not always master of his own words, and when new thoughts arise, they may lead a long way from the subject, to which there is sometimes a difficulty in returning. Hence digressions, prolixities, appendages, which cause the main object to be lost to view, and wear out or render languid the attention of the audience.

All who extemporise have had this misfortune some time or other. If you do not accustom yourself to hold with a firm hand the thread of your thoughts, so that you can always, amidst the labyrinth of the discourse and the many mazes into which you may be drawn, recover your way, you will never come to speak in an endurable manner; and even though you should have fine passages, the hearer will grow weary of your devious style, and when all is said he will be neither instructed nor impressed.

You may dazzle him by the pomp of language, surprise him by ideas more or less ingenious, nay amuse him, for a moment, by the wit and sparkle of your expressions; but you will not suggest one idea to his mind nor instil a single feeling into his ear, because there will be neither order nor unity, and therefore no life in your discourse.

It is further essential to beware of the distractions which may break the thread of the exposition, and abruptly send the mind into a totally different and an unprepared channel. This is another of the dangers attending extemporisation, which imperatively demands that you should give yourself wholly to your subject, and thus exclude from your mind every extraneous image and thought;—no easy task, when a man stands face to face with a numerous assembly, whose eyes from all directions are centred upon him, tempting him to look at people, were it only because people are all looking at him.

On this account it is necessary that the orator before speaking should be collected,—he should be wholly absorbed in his ideas, and proof against the interruptions and impressions which surround him. The slightest distraction to which he yields may break the chain of his thoughts, mar his plan, and even sponge out of his mind the very remembrance of his subject itself. This appears incredible, and I would not believe it myself had I not experienced it.

One day, I had to preach in one of the principal churches of Paris. It was a solemn festival, and there was an immense audience, including part of the Court then reigning. As I was ascending the pulpit I perceived a person whom I had supposed absent, and my mind was carried away suddenly by a train of recollections. I reached the pulpit-landing, knelt down as usual, and when I should have risen to speak, I had forgotten not only my text, but even the subject of my sermon. I literally knew no longer what I had come to speak upon, and, despite of all my efforts to remember, it, I could see nothing but one complete blank. My embarrassment and anguish may be conceived. I remained on my knees a little longer than was customary, not knowing what to do. Nevertheless, not losing head or heart, I looked full at my danger without being scared by it, yet without seeing how I was to get out of it either. At last, unable to recover anything by my own proper strength,—neither subject nor text,—I had recourse to God, and I said to Him, from the very bottom of my heart and with all the fervour of my anxiety,—"Lord if it be Thy will that I preach, give me back my plan;" and at that instant, my text came back into my mind, and with my text the subject. I think that never in my life have I experienced anything more astonishing, nor a more lively emotion of gratitude.

At other times, and this often happens, you [illegible] lose while speaking the thread of your discourse, especially when some new idea crosses, or if you allow yourself to begin looking about among the audience. You generally become aware of it ere the sentence you are uttering is finished; for when you extemporise, you always see the next idea before you have done with its predecessor, and in order to advance with certainty you must look somewhat forward, in order to discern where you are going to plant your foot presently. Suddenly, you can see nothing before you, and you are come to the closing member of your period. If you then become agitated, you are lost; for anxiety, far from enabling you to recover your ideas, confuses them still more, and the more disturbed you get, the less capable are you of retrieving your plan and re-entering the road. In these cases, you must calmly, under another form, with other phrases, resume the same thought you have just expressed, and nearly always it recalls that which was lost; it gently excites the remembrance of it, by virtue of the association of ideas and of the previous elaboration of the plan. But while yet speaking, you must look inwards with the whole sight of your mind, in order to discern what this species of conjuration shall evoke, and at the slightest sign to grasp your idea once more. All this is not effected without perplexity or without interior tribulation.

There are untoward days, when one is scarcely master of one's attention, and in spite of the most laborious preparation the plan refuses to fix itself in the head, or to stay there, escaping on one side or on other, as in a sieve; or else something comes across which throws you out of your way. It is often the effect of some physical cause;—a nervous or a feverish state, arising from atmospheric influences, from the body's or a single bodily organs, indisposition, and above all from anxieties of heart or of mind.

In such cases there is much difficulty in entering upon one's plan or in keeping to it. Sometimes, indeed, one does not enter into it at all, and one speaks at the side of it, so to say, trying to catch it, and unable to overtake it so as to settle oneself therein, like a man who runs after the conveyance which was to have carried him, and who reaches the door without being able to open it and take his seat. This is one of the most fatiguing situations with which I am acquainted. It exhausts alike the will, the mind, and the body;—the will, which makes vain endeavours to recapture a subject perpetually evading it; the mind, which struggles in a desperate wrestle with its own thoughts; and the body, which travails and sweats, as if to compensate by exterior agitation for the interior activity which is deficient.

For the greatest possible avoidance of distractions, I will recommend a thing which I have always found successful—that is, not to contemplate the individuals who compose the audience, and thus not to establish a special understanding with any one of them. The short-sighted have no need of my recommendation, but it will be useful to those who see far, and who may be disturbed by some sudden impression or some movement of curiosity. As for myself I carefully avoid all ocular contact with no matter whom, and I restrict myself to a contemplation of the audience as a whole,—keeping my looks above the level of the heads. Thus I see all, and distinguish nobody, so that the entire attention of my mind remains fastened upon my plan and my ideas.

I do not, however, advise an imitation of Bourdaloue, who closed his eyes while delivering his sermon, lest his memory should fail, or some distraction sweep away part of his discourse. It is a great disadvantage to shut the eyes while speaking; for the look and its play are among the most effectual means of oratorical action. It darts fire and light, it radiates the most vital energy, and people understand the orator by looking at him and following the play of his eyes almost as well as by listening to his voice and words.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE CRISIS OF THE DISCOURSE.

I GIVE this name to the moment when the speech produces its highest effect, by piercing and mastering the hearer's soul either with the light which it imparts, or the feelings which it arouses. The listener is at that solemn instant won, and remains passive under the influence which touches and vivifies. But in order to understand this state, it is necessary to consider closely, and in their respective relations, the two poles which speaking instantaneously unites for the achievement of its end.

Eloquence has this peculiarity which distinguishes it from other arts, that it is always through the intelligence it reaches the heart,—that is, it is by means of the idea which it engenders or gives birth to; and this is what makes it the most excellent, the most profound of arts, because it takes possession of the whole man and can neither charm, nor move, nor bear him along, except by enlightening him and causing him to think. It is not a matter of mere sensibility, imagination, or passion, as in music and painting, which may produce great effects without thought having a predominant share in them, although those arts themselves have a loftier and a wider range in proportion as the intelligence plays a greater part, and ideas exercise a higher sway in their operations.

Yet in music and in the plastic arts, ideas are so blended with form and so controlled by it, that it is very difficult to abstract them from it, with a view of testing their value and analysing them; they flow with the form which is their vehicle, and you could scarcely translate them into any intelligible or precise language. Hence the vagueness of these arts, and particularly of music; a fact which does not prevent it from exercising a powerful effect at the very moment of the impression, which, however, is transient, and leaves little behind it. It vanishes almost as soon as the sounds which have produced it cease.

In eloquence, on the contrary, the form is subordinate to the idea. In itself it possesses little to dazzle or to charm,—it is articulate language, which certainly is far less agreeable than language sung, or melody. However sonorous the voice of the speaker, it will never charm the ear like a musical passage, and even the most graceful or the most energetic oratorical action can never have the elegance, harmony, or finish which the painter or the sculptor is able to give to the bodies of the characters whom he represents. Notwithstanding which the tones and action of the speaker often produce astonishing effects on those who hear him, which are lost in reading what he has said, or in his written discourse.

It follows that eloquence has its own artistic or æsthetical side, besides that idea which it is its business to convey. But it relies much more on the idea than do the other arts, so that the absence or the feebleness of the idea is much more felt in it, and it is impossible to be a great orator, without possessing a lofty intelligence and great power of thought; whereas a man may be a distinguished musician, painter, or sculptor without any brilliant share of these endowments; which amounts to this, that eloquence is the most intellectual of the arts, and whose exercise requires the mightiest faculties of the mind.

Whence, again, it follows,—and it is to this we would come,—that eloquence is the profoundest and the most difficult of arts, on account of the end at which it aims, which is not merely to charm, please, or amuse, transiently, but to penetrate into the soul, that it may move and change the will, may excite or may prevent its action by means of the ideas which it engenders, or, as it is expressed in rhetorical treatises, by convincing and persuading. The true end of the orator is to make himself master of souls, guiding them by his mind, causing them to think as he thinks, and thus imparting to their wills the movements and direction of his own.

I well know that the multitude may be stirred and carried away by fine phrases, by brilliant images, and above all by bursts of voice and a vehement action, without any great amount of ideas at the root. The orator, in this instance, acts after the manner of music, which produces feelings and sometimes deeds, without thoughts. But what is sufficient in music is at the very utmost but half of what eloquence requires, and although it may indeed produce some effect in this way, it remains beneath itself, and loses in dignity. It is sonorous but empty; it is a sounding cymbal, or, if the comparison be liked better, it is a scenic decoration, which produces a momentary illusion, and leaves little behind it.

Eloquence is not worthy of its name, and fulfils not its high vocation, except in so far as it sways the human will by intelligence, determining its resolutions in a manner suitable to a rational and free being, not by mere sensible impressions, or by sallies of passion, but above all, by the aspect of truth, by convictions of what is just and right, that is, by the idea of them which it gives, or rather, which it ought to engender, develope, and bring to life in the soul.

In a word, everything in the discourse is reducible to this point—that the hearer should be made to conceive what the orator understands, and as he understands it, in order that he may feel what the orator feels and will what he wills; in other words, that an idea should be engendered in the understanding of the hearer similar to the idea of the speaker, in order that their hearts as well as their minds may be in unison. There lies the difficulty, and they who can overcome it are indeed eloquent.

But there are many things required for this, —or, to put it in another way, there are, in the operation which the orator has no effect, several stages or degrees which are known to all who speak in public, or of which at least they have had experience, even if they have not categorically explained them to themselves.

The first stage is that in which the audience is won,—the speaker commands it.

The second is that in which his address enters the hearer's soul, and makes him conceive the idea.

The third is like the organisation of this conception.

The hearer who has conceived the idea makes one with the orator in mind and will—there is but one soul between them,—it is the completion of the work by which the speaker takes possession of him whom he has moved and convinced.

Let us consider these three stages.

To win the hearer is to seize his attention, and so to fix it that he shall listen without effort, and even with pleasure to what is said, opening his mind for its reception and absorption, to the exclusion of all other thought, image, or sensation which may arise. Now this capture of mind by a discourse is no easy matter, and it sometimes requires a considerable time and sustained exertions to obtain it. At other times, it is effected at once, at the first words, whether on account of the confidence inspired by the speaker, or of the lively interest of the subject and the curiosity which it excites, or for whatever reason else. It is hard to give a recommendation in this respect, seeing the great diversity of circumstances which may in this case exercise a favourable or an adverse influence; but this we may safely assert, that you must attain this point in order to produce any impression by your speech.

There are few who know how to listen; it presupposes a great desire for instruction, and therefore a consciousness of one's ignorance, and a certain mistrust of one's self, which springs from modesty or humility,—the rarest of virtues. Besides, listening demands a certain strength of will, which makes a person capable of directing the mind to one point and there keeping it despite of every distraction. Even when you are alone with a serious book, what trouble you have in concentrating your attention so as to comprehend what you are reading. And if the perusal be protracted, what a number of things escape and have to be read over again! What will it not be, then, in the midst of a crowd in which you are assailed on all hands by a variety of impressions?

Besides, each individual comes with a different disposition, with different anxieties or with prejudices in proportion to age, condition, and antecedents. Imagine several hundreds, several thousands, of persons in an audience, and you have as many opinions as there are heads, as many passions as there are interests and situations, and in all this great crowd few agree in thoughts, feelings, and desires. Each muses on this matter or on that, desires one thing or another, has such or such prepossessions; when lo! in the midst of all these divergences, of all these contrarieties, I rise, a man, mount pulpit or platform, and have to make all attend in order to make all think, feel, and will, just as I do. Truly it is a stupendous task, and one which cannot be achieved except by a power almost above humanity.

Rhetoricians say that the exordium should be devoted to this purpose. It is at the outset that you should endeavour to captivate the mind and to attach it to the subject, either by forcibly striking it by surprise, as in the exordium *ex abrupto*, or in dexterously winning good will, as in the exordium "of insinuation." All this is true, but the precept is not easy to reduce to practice. It is tantamount to saying that in order to make a good beginning a great power, or a great adroitness, in speaking is required. Who shall give us this?

The first moments of the discourse are generally very difficult to the orator, not only on account of the trouble he experiences in setting out, in laying down and developing his subject, as we just now showed, but also on account of the necessity of making his audience set out; and here he meets at starting, either the resistance of inertness, the indolence loth to take the pains of listening, or else the levity which flies off each instant, or else the latent or the express opposition of some adverse prejudice, or interest. He has, therefore, to wrestle with his hearer in order to overcome him, and in this he is not always successful.

Until everybody has taken his place and settled himself well in it, and then has coughed, cleared his throat, blown his nose, and made a stir as long as he decently can in his situation, the poor orator speaks more or less in the midst of noise, or at least of a half-repressed disturbance, which hinders his words, at first, from having any effect upon the mind. They penetrate nowhere, they return to him, and he is tempted to give way to discouragement, especially in large assemblies where there are all sorts of people, as at a sermon. If he waver, he is undone, he will never become master of his hearers, and his discourse will be powerless.

What will sustain him is, first of all, a lively sense of the mission intrusted to him, of the duty he has to fulfil,—and, in the next place, that something which is peculiar to the strong man, and by which he derives excitement from opposition or difficulty, and enthusiasm from the strife. The more resistance they meet, the more they endeavour to prevail, the more they desire victory;—it is one of valour's spurs in the conflict. Again, what is very useful to him in this emergency is the authority of speech which soon asserts a kind of ascendency over the hearer,—a sympathetic something in the voice which pleases the ear and reaches the heart, or else a certain pungency of pronunciation and accent which wins the attention.

By these means, and those of which we before spoke, and above all by help from on high, you succeed more or less quickly in seizing upon your audience, in commanding it, in winning it, in chaining it, so to say, to your discourse, so that all minds, rallying in a common attention, converge towards a single point, and appear to hang on the speaker's lips, while all eyes are fixed upon him. Then is established that solemn stillness upon which the life of speaking is conditional. No more fidgetings on chair or bench; no more nose-blowing, no more throat-clearing; even colds are cured as if by magic, and in the absence of all noisy sounds, there is nothing to be heard save the respiration of the audience, and the voice of the orator, as it arises, prevails, and diffuses itself. The assembly is won—it listens.

Secondly.--Now alone can be achieved the task of eloquence, which is to engender in the hearer the requisite idea, so as to make him conceive and feel what it enunciates.

Here, as in all conceptions, there are two poles, the one active, which transmits life, the other passive, which conceives by admitting it; and conception is effected by their interpenetration. Such is the operation when all looks are bent, strained, towards the orator, every mind is open to welcome and absorb his words with all its powers, and those words sink into and fertilise it by their virtue. It is thus that ideas are produced by instruction, which is a real fertilisation and a nourishment of the intelligence; for "*man lives not by bread alone, but by every word of truth.*"

This is the most momentous period of the discourse, what we term the crisis, or supreme effort of speaking; it is truth itself, it is He who calls Himself "the way, the truth, and the life," who, by the mouth of his minister, or of some man of his choice, acts upon the soul, pierces it, and makes a settlement therein, that it may become as a throne where He loves to sit, as a sanctuary which He is pleased to inhabit, as a mirror in which He reflects Himself with predilection, as a torch by which He desires to shine and to diffuse his light.

In the physical world wherever there is the communication and reproduction of life, it is also the Living God who ACTS; whereas the men, the animals, and the plants which are employed in this great operation, are merely organs and implements in the work. This is why the gospel declares that there is but one Father, He from whom all paternity is derived in heaven and on earth; as He alone is good, because He is the source of every good, and He alone is Master and Lord, because He is truth.

It is just the same, and for still greater reason, in the moral world, or in the communication of intellectual life. It is an operation performed according to the same laws,—and on this account, he who instructs or effects a mental genesis (the true meaning of the word "instruct"),—that person also is a father intellectually, and it is the noblest and most prolific species of paternity.

Such is the sublime mission of the orator, such the high function which he discharges. When he circulates a living word, it is a transmission of life, it is a reproduction and multiplication of truth in the souls of others whom he intellectually vivifies, as a father his offspring according to the flesh. As He whose image and instrument he is, diffuses His light, warmth, and life over all creatures, so the orator, filled with inspiration, instils upon the spot into thousands of hearers the light of his word, the warmth of his heart, and the life of his soul. He fertilises all these intelligences at once; and this is why, as soon as the rays of his discourse have entered them and imparted to them the new conception, they make but one soul with him, and he is master of that soul, and pours into it virtue from on high.

They all live in unison at that important moment, identified by the words which have mastered them.

This critical instant of the discourse, when the supreme effort of eloquence is achieved, is accordingly marked by the profoundest emotion of which men are susceptible, that which always attends the communication of life, and in this case by so much the more replete with happiness as the life of the intellect is more pure, and less remote from Him who is its source.

Hence that exquisite feeling, to which no other is to be compared, which the orator experiences when his words enter into and vivify the minds of his audience; and hence also the sweet impressions of which these last are conscious when they receive the spirit of the word and by it are nourished.

Thirdly.—When the orator has thus penetrated into the hearer's soul by the radiation of his speech, animating that soul with its life, he becomes master of it, impresses, moves, and turns it at will, without effort, in the simplest manner, by a word, a gesture, an exclamation, nay silence itself. The fact is, he possesses the hearer's heart; it is open to him, and there is between them an intimate communication which has scarcely any further need of exterior means. Thus it is with two persons who love each other dearly, and who have confidence in each other; they understand each other, without speaking, and the feeling which animates and unites them is so intimate and so sweet that language is powerless to express it, and they need it no longer to make themselves mutually understood.

Everything, then, is in the orator's power when he has thus won his audience, and he ought to take advantage of this power which is given to him temporarily, to complete his work, and to develope and organise in the minds of the listeners the idea to which he has given birth; this is the third stage of his undertaking.

Strike the iron while it is hot, says the proverb. In the present instance there is something more than iron and better than iron to forge and fashion; there is the young life which eloquence has called forth to develope, in order that the conceived idea may take shape in the understanding, and influence the will—partly through the emotion which it has produced, and partly through the intellectual views which furnish the will with motives, as feeling and passion supply it with incentives. Eloquence would miss its aim, if it failed to lead the hearer to some act by which the idea is to be realised.

It is in this last stage, then, that the practical part of the discourse should be placed along with the application of deductions. In these must the speaker reap the fruits of his labour. After having imparted his feelings and thoughts to the listener, he must also make them partakers of his will. He must imprint his personality upon them, fashion them in his resemblance, so that they shall feel, think, and will as he does, in the interest of that truth and excellence of which he has brought home to them the manifestation. He must not take leave of his audience till he has touched, convinced, and carried it away. It is in the peroration, as we are about to see, that the seal must be set to the work, and that it must receive its plenary completeness.

CHAP. XXIV.

THE CLOSE OF THE DISCOURSE, OR PERORATION.

If it is difficult to begin, when one extemporises, it is still more difficult to finish—that is, to finish well. Most orators spoil their speeches by lengthiness, and prolixity is the principal disadvantage of extemporaneous speaking. In it, more than in any other, one wants time to be brief, and there is a perpetual risk of being carried away by the movement of the thoughts or the expressions.

It sometimes happens, unfortunately, that you are barely into your subject when you should end; and then, with a confused feeling of all that you have omitted, and a sense of what you might still say, you are anxious to recover lost ground in some degree, and you begin some new development when you ought to be concluding. This tardy, and unseasonable, yet crude after-growth has the very worst effect upon the audience which, already fatigued, becomes impatient and listens no longer. The speaker loses his words and his trouble, and everything which he adds by way of elucidating or corroborating what he has said, spoils what has gone before, destroying the impression of it. He repeats himself unconsciously, and those who still listen to him follow him with uneasiness, as men watch from shore a bark which seeks to make port and cannot. It is a less evil to turn short round and finish abruptly than thus to tack incessantly without advancing. For the greatest of a speaker's misfortunes is that he should bore.

The bored hearer becomes almost an enemy. He can no longer attend, and yet, at that moment, he is unable to think of anything else. His mind is like an overladen stomach which requires rest, and into which additional aliment is thrust despite of its distaste and repugnance; it needs not much to make it rise, rebel, and disgorge the whole of what it has received. An unseasonable or awkward speaker inflicts a downright torture on those who are compelled to hear him, a torture that may amount to sickness or a nervous paroxysm. Such is the state into which a too lengthy discourse, and, above all, a never-ending peroration, plunge the audience. It is easy to calculate the dispositions which it inspires and the fruit it produces.

Sometimes—and I humbly confess that I here speak from experience—the orator is still more unfortunate, if that were possible. He wants to finish, and no longer knows how, like a man who seeks to quit a house in danger, and finds all the doors shut; he runs right and left to discover an escape, and strikes against dead walls. Meanwhile time presses, and the impatience of the public betrays itself by a repressed disturbance, some rising to go away, some moving on their seats to relieve themselves, while a confused hum ascends towards the speaker,—a too certain token that he is no longer attended to, and that he is speaking to the air, which fact only increases his agitation and perplexity. At last, as everything has an end in this world, he reaches his conclusion after some fashion or other, and war-weary, either by catching hold of the common-place wind-up about eternal life, should he be preaching, or, under other circumstances, by some panting period which has the air of expressing a feeling or a thought, and which in nine cases out of ten, fills the ear with sonorous and empty words. And thus the poor orator who could do better, and who is conscious that he has done ill, retires, with lowly mien, much confused, and vowing, though rather late, that they shall not catch him in that way any more.

Alas! yet again, perhaps shall they so catch him, even after the most laborious preparation; for there is nothing so fitful as eloquence. It needs but an omission, a distraction to break the thread of the ideas and launch you into void or darkness, and then you grope in a forest, or rather struggle amid a chaos. It is a true oratorical discomfiture and rout; and I have remarked that it happens most when one is most sure of oneself and hopes to produce the greatest effect. These are lessons which He, who exalts the humble and abases the proud, is pleased occasionally to give public speakers, so prone to be elated by success and to ascribe to themselves its credit and its glory. Happy are they if they profit by them.

There is a way of concluding which is the most simple, the most rational, and the least adopted. True, it gives little trouble and affords no room for pompous sentences, and that is why so many despise it, and do not even give it a thought. It consists merely of winding up by a rapid recapitulation of the whole discourse, presenting in sum what has been developed in the various parts, so as to enunciate only the leading ideas with their connection;—a process which gives the opportunity of a nervous and lively summary, foreshortening all that has been stated, and making the remembrance and profitable application of it easy.

And since you have spoken to gain some point, to convince and persuade your hearer, and thus influence his will by impressions and considerations, and finally by some paramount feeling which must give the finishing stroke and determine him to action, the epitome of the ideas must be itself strengthened, and, as it were, rendered living by a few touching words, which inspirit the feeling in question at the last moment, so that the convinced and affected auditor shall be ready to do what he is required.

Such, in my mind, is the best peroration, because it is alike the most natural and the most efficacious. It is the straight aim of the discourse, and as it issues from the very bowels of the subject and from the direct intention of the speaker, it goes right to the soul of the listener and places the two in unison at the close.

I am aware that you may, and with success, adopt a different method of concluding, either by some pungent things which you reserve for your peroration, and which tend to maintain to the last and even to reawaken the attention of the audience; or else by well-turned periods which flatter the ear and excite all sorts of feelings, more or less analogous to the subject,—or in fine, by any other way. Undoubtedly there are circumstances in which these oratorical artifices are in keeping, and may prove advantageous or agreeable; I do not reject them, for in war all means, not condemned by humanity and honour, and capable of procuring victory, are allowable,—and public speaking is a real conflict; I merely depose that the simplest method is also the best, and that the others, belonging more to art than to nature, are rather in the province of rhetoric than of true eloquence.

CHAP. XXV.

AFTER THE DISCOURSE.

It should seem as if all had been said, once the discourse is concluded; and yet we will add a few words in the physical and moral interest of the speaker, we will point out to him various precautions which may appear futile to certain persons, and may prove serviceable to others; at least we have always found our own account in having adopted them.

On quitting the pulpit, the platform, or any other place where you have been speaking for a considerable time and with animation, you should try to remain quiet for a while in order to recompose yourself gradually, and to allow the species of fever which has excited and consumed you to subside. The head particularly needs rest,—for nothing is so fatiguing to it as extemporaneous speaking, which brings into play all the faculties of the mind, strains them to the uttermost, and thus causes a powerful determination of blood to the brain. Moreover, the nervous system, which is ancillary to it, is strongly agitated,—it requires tranquillising,—and the whole body, violently exerted as it has been by the oratorical delivery, requires refreshment and repose; and these, a slight doze, if it is possible to obtain one in a case of the sort, will afford better than any other means.

The vocal organs which have just been exercised to excess, ought to be kept unemployed; and therefore great care should be taken,—if indeed the inconvenience can be avoided,—not to receive visits or hold conversations. In the fatigue of the moment, any new effort, however small, is prejudicial, and takes away more strength than the most violent exertions at another time. The first thing to do in this state is to return thanks to God for the danger escaped, and for the help received, even when you fancy that you have not achieved the success which you desire. Public speaking is so hazardous a thing, that one never knows what will be the issue of it, and in nothing is assistance from above so really necessary.

He who feels the importance and the danger of speaking, who has any notion of what the orator ought to be, any notion of all that he needs to accomplish his task, the obstacles he must surmount, the difficulties he must overcome, and, on the other hand, how slight a matter suffices to overthrow or paralyse him,—he who understands all this can well conceive also that he requires to be breathed upon from on high in order to receive the inspiration, the light, fire, which shall make his discourse living and efficacious. For all life comes from Him who is life itself, life infinite, life eternal, inexhaustible, and the life of minds more still than of bodies, since God is spirit. It is but just, therefore, to pay Him homage for what He has vouchsafed to give us, and to refer to Him at the earliest moment the fruit or glory of what we have received. This is the more fitting, because there is nothing more intoxicating than the successes of eloquence; and in the elation which its power gives, owing to a consciousness of strength, and the visible influence which one is exercising over one's fellow-creatures, one is naturally prone to exalt oneself in one's own conceit, and to ascribe to oneself, directly or indirectly, wholly or partially, the effect produced. One should beware of these temptations of pride, these illusions of vanity, which are invariably fatal to true talent.

Within that measure, it is allowable to rejoice to a certain extent at what one has achieved, in the very great relief which is experienced after speaking. I know nothing equal to this sense of relief, especially when one thinks that the task has not been unworthily performed,—except the anguish felt before beginning a speech. The one is the consequence of the other; for the greatest joys of this world are always produced by the cessation of the greatest troubles.

First, there is a sort of infantine joy at being delivered from a difficult task, or disencumbered of a heavy burden. Labour weighs hard upon all the children of Adam, even on those who the most feel its necessity, and we instinctively shun it to the utmost. Besides which, rest after sharp fatigue is delicious, and particularly after the labours of the mind. Socrates, son of a midwife, used to say that he continued the occupation of his mother; but it was in the mental order, by means of his interrogatories and dialectics, and hence the eristic method. One may say, then, with the wisest of the Greeks, that the delivery of a discourse in public is the production of an intellectual offspring; and very fortunate it is when that offspring is not dead or unlikely to live. To conceive an idea, to organise it in a plan vigorously meditated, and to carry this mental progeny for more or less time in the understanding, and then when matured to give it to the light amidst the dangers and the throes of public speaking, this is an exertion which produces immense relief and a very great satisfaction when it succeeds. And truly, how light one feels after a speech, and how comfortable the relaxation of mind and body after the extreme tension which has wrung all the springs and exhausted all the exertions of one's vital power! None can know it, save him who has experienced it.

After this comes a feeling at once higher and deeper, that of duty accomplished, of a task honourably fulfilled, one of the sweetest joys of conscience. Finally, another feeling raises us in our own estimation even while inspiring us with humility, that of being an instrument of truth to make it known to men as far as our weakness allows, and of having given testimony to it at the cost of some sacrifices, or at least of our toil and sweat. You are never more closely united with Truth than when you are announcing it with conviction and devotedness. When you are called to proclaim it solemnly, it reveals itself or makes itself felt in a manner quite peculiar, and, as Bossuet says, with sudden illuminations. He who instructs others in hearty and living language derives more profit than even those whom he teaches, and receives more light than he imparts. This is why teaching is the best method of learning.

From these mingled sentiments results a state full of sweetness, especially if you believe that you have succeeded, and in general your own feeling does not deceive you in this respect. Still, illusion is possible, whether for good or ill, because the true orator, who always needs inspiration, never has a very clear consciousness of what he has done, or rather of what has been done by him. God alone, who inspires him, illumines the minds of the hearers by His light, and changes their hearts by his grace. Now God frequently employs the weakest instruments, apparently, to touch the soul, as He has renewed the face of the world by what, in the eyes of human wisdom, were the meanest and most foolish of mankind.

Thus, a discourse with which a speaker is dissatisfied, because it has fallen short of his ideal and of his plan, has produced a profound impression and has subjugated every listener; whereas another, with which he was delighted and which he thought highly effective, has produced nothing save his own fruitless exultation, and too often an augmentation of his vain-glory. Here, as in everything, the Almighty is absolute:—He sports with the desires, efforts, and opinions of men, and makes them instrumental, according to His good pleasure, in the manifestation of truth, and the promotion of the designs of His justice or His mercy.

Let no speaker, then, too much disquiet himself as to the effect he may have produced and the results of his discourse; let him leave all this in the hands of God, whose organ he is, and let him beseech Him to make something accrue from it to His glory, if success has been achieved; or if he has had the misfortune to fail, to make good out of this evil come, as it belongs to the Divine Power to do, and to that power alone.

Above all, let him not canvass this person and that inquisitively concerning what their feelings were in hearing him, and their opinion of his discourse and his manner. All such questions seek a motive for self-love, rather than any useful hints; they are an indirect way of going in quest of praise and admiration, and may be carried to a very abject extent, in order to get oneself consideration, criticising one's one performance merely to elicit a contrary verdict—tricks and subterfuges of vanity, which begs its bread in the meanest quarters, and which in its excessive craving for flattery, challenges applause and extorts eulogy. This wretched propensity is so inborn in human nature, since original sin, that frequently the greatest orators are not proof against this littleness, which abuses them in the eyes of God and man. Besides, it is a way of exposing oneself to cruel disappointments.

At length when the speaker is sufficiently rested, and has become more calm, next day, for instance, let him review his plan while his recollections are still new, in order to correct and perfect it by the side of what he has actually said, either rectifying the succession of the ideas, if necessary, or adding those which have occurred to him while speaking. It will be so much gained for some future speech on the same plan.

If the discourse has been really successful, and he feels inclined, let him write according to his plan as he has spoken, and thus he will compose a finished, after having delivered an extemporaneous, production. Great orators have in this manner writen several of their orations subsequently, — Cicero, Bossuet, and others. In this case, the surest method is to have a short-hand writer who shall supply you with the whole of what you have said, and whose reports you can rewrite, yet so rewrite as to preserve whatever vivid or striking things the spoken words possessed.

This is a labour which we have often executed, always with advantage, and never without a feeling of humility. For unless you have verified it, you can hardly form an idea how wretched upon paper looks the most easy, the most elegant extemporaneous address, even that which produced the greatest effect at the moment itself; and how very much it admits of improvement in point of style and readableness. That is why orators of mark, and even of the highest order, whose quivering and action-heated eloquence moves and overcomes any assembly, vanish, as it were, on being perused; so that on seeing the reckoning of their extemporaneous harangues, divested of the accents of their voice, the play of their physiognomy, and their gestures, you ask yourself with amazement how such a discourse could have produced an effect so wondrous. It is that speaking and writing are not the same thing; people do not write as they speak, and frequently he who speaks the best knows nothing about writing, just as the ablest writer is not always capable of speaking.

Our modest task is over; for we had, we repeat, no pretension of compassing a treatise on the art of speaking; our single object was to transfer the results of our experience to those whose calling it is to speak in public. These very simple counsels, we hope, may prove useful to some, either by sparing them trials which are always painful, even when they are productive of fruit, or by showing them a more easy process than their own, or a surer way.

However this may be, we warn them at parting that those alone can derive any benefit from our remarks, who shall have received from nature the gift of eloquence, and whom God, who is the Word by pre-eminence, shall assist by His grace in the management of this formidable weapon, this two-edged sword, for the manifestation of truth, the fulfilment of His designs among men, and the renewal of the world.

CHAP. XXVI.

THE LOGIC OF THE ORATOR.

If the reader fancy that we are about to assemble before him a formidable body of scholastic rules, and to enter the labyrinth of the Aristotelian Logic, we beg him to dismiss the apprehension. Our purpose is far simpler, and is limited to setting forth in an unpretending way those turns and connections of reasoning which, consciously or unconsciously, the public speaker is called upon to employ. Something of this detailed and exemplified character seems requisite to the American student, as an append to the suggestive and eloquent work of Monsieur Bautain. We shall be strictly *practical* in both plan and execution, and when we adopt authorities the reader may rely upon it that good ones are followed, whether cited or not, in their own language.

We confine ourselves to Logic so far as it concerns the orator, and we go no step further. The examples chosen shall be from spoken, argumentative productions, and the nomenclature that which has the sanction of past and present use. All beyond this, lies outside of our plan. Yet so connected are all cognate subjects of thought and investigation that a familiarity with the principles of reasoning as here stated and applied, will not fail to introduce the reader, if the study be new or obscure to him, to the science at large. With this advantage, that the direct and positive examples he will meet with, taken from actual occasions and relating to immediate interests, will have infused a vitality which is not found in the Tree of Porphyry, and which is wanting to the mere verbalities of scholasticism. Nothing of the kind here attempted, has yet fallen in our way, and believing that a *desideratum* exists which ought to be supplied, we now proceed in the attempt to supply it.

The object of all public speaking, where logic prevails, is *to carry some point or other:* to establish some proposition, either opposed, or not. All evidence—and consequently all *proof*—is built upon the idea of a connection between that which is asserted and that which ought to be conceded; to wit, the point to be carried. What this connection is, and whether it exists or not, is a question of special knowledge—therefore "get knowledge." The orator's logic does *not* furnish that; it *does* show him how to use it to advantage.

The *Enthymeme* is the orator's form of argument. It is an elliptical statement of his reasoning. One of his propositions is held back in his mind—such is the literal meaning of the term—the other two, only, are expressed. For such is the mysterious process (to employ one of Monsieur Bautain's similitudes), of mental generation—there must be three terms, three propositions, three thoughts in the act of reason. The first two by their union engender the third.

Take an example: The philosopher might discourse thus formally,

1. We ought to love what renders us more perfect.
2. Now literature renders us more perfect.
3. Therefore we ought to love literature.

Deny the first proposition, and the argument fails; its *major premiss* is gone. Deny the second, it again fails: its *minor premiss* has disappeared. But grant both, and the third, the *conclusion*, stands firm.

This slow mode of statement suits not, however, the fervid movement of the orator. He exclaims, "Who is it that loves not *letters?* They enrich the understanding, and refine the manners; they polish and adorn humanity. Self-love and good sense themselves endear them to us, and engage us in their cultivation." Zeno said that the philosophic argument is like the human hand closed, the oratorical like the same hand unfolded.

When argumentation is linked in a chain, it is called a *Sorites.* Public discourse, from time to time, makes use of it. A playful example is seen when the Thracians let loose a fox on a frozen river to try the ice. Renard put his ear down, and seemed to say, "Whatever makes a noise moves; what moves is not frozen hard; that which is not hard is liquid; liquid will bend under weight; therefore, if I perceive, close to my ear, the sound of water, it is not frozen, and the ice is too weak to bear me." The Thracians saw Renard stop, then retreat when he heard the sound of the water.

The *Epichirema* is but an involved *syllogism*, or regular argument. Example:

1. Whatever destroys trade is ruinous to Great Britain (because it deprives the laborer of his ordinary means of support, and reduces the source of the revenue).
2. *War* destroys trade (for it interrupts the exportation of manufactured articles).
3. Therefore, war is ruinous to Great Britain.

Cicero calls the Epichirema *ratiocination*. You see that it supports the chain of argument by subordinate proofs. It is reducible to the orator's purpose, as follows:

"War is ruinous to Great Britain because it deprives the laborer," &c., adding all that above which is included in the two parentheses. This gives us, at once, the form of the Enthymeme.

The *Dilemma*, divides the adversary's argument into two or more parts, and then opposes to each of them an unanswerable reply. It is no more than several Enthymemes, joined together. For instance (regularly in form):

1. He who writes on general topics must either *support popular prejudices*, or *oppose them*.

2. If he supports them, he will be condemned by the intelligent.
3. If he opposes them, he will be condemned by the ignorant.
4. Therefore he who writes on general topics, will be condemned.

The orator turns the argument into an Enthymeme somewhat in this way.

He who writes on general topics will be condemned, because he must either support popular prejudices, or oppose them. If he oppose them, he will be condemned by the ignorant, if he support them, by the intelligent.

Patrick Henry's famous oration for the war, runs into the form of a dilemma. He argues, "We must resort either to submission or to arms. Therefore there is no need of longer debate. We have tried submission in vain—and the war is already begun. There is no peace.'"

The dilemma is most frequently employed for retort. The best way of replying to it is to show that the adversary has not fully, or fairly, ***subdivided*** his subject. The well known dispute of the travellers, concerning the chamelion's color, is an example. The creature when "produced," was of no one of the colors *named by the three disputants.*

A dilemma and its retort are seen in the often-quoted case of Protagoras and Eualthus. Protagoras had taught Eualthus the art of pleading under the stipulation that one-half of the reward should be paid in advance, and the other half upon Eualthus' winning his first cause. Protagoras soon sued Eualthus for the rest of his debt, and said to him: *If I gain the cause, you must pay me by the Court's decree: if I lose the cause, you must pay me by the terms of our agreement. Therefore, whether I gain or lose the cause, you must pay me the money.* To which dilemma the pupil opposed another: *If I gain the cause,* I shall not pay you by *the decree of the Court. If I lose* it, I shall not pay you by *the terms of our agreement. Therefore, in neither case shall I pay you the money.* Eualthus was right. No *cause of action* had yet arisen. The *old* pleader's object was, no doubt, to furnish his young friend a won case, and so receive his money.

The argument *à priori* is, when we appeal to a reasonable, natural expectancy. The magnificent oration of Paul before Agrippa proceeds in the *à priori* form. He describes his "manner of life from his youth," his training after the straitest sect of his religion, a Pharisee. The inference *à priori* must be that such a one knew well the prophecies of the Jews, and could wisely judge of their fulfilment in the Messiah. Next he recites his bitter prejudices and persecutions of the believers. The inference *à priori* must be that such a man would join himself to them only from overwhelming reasons of conviction.

The argument *à posteriori* is the direct opposite of the former: it *looks back*, and from effects and consequences infers causes. "If such and such be the effects of this law—the inevitable and undeniable effects, can the law itself be good?—a good tree is known by its fruits, &c." Webster's fervid burst of declamation over the vision of a broken union—"States dissevered, discordant, belligerent, a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood"—is an *à posteriori* argument for a union "now and forever one and inseparable." Curran's awful denunciation of an Informer, "A wretch that is buried a man till his heart has time to fester and dissolve, and is then dug up a witness," "how the stormy wave of the multitude retired at his approach," &c., argues from these hideous effects that the prosecution of the government against Finnerty, needing and producing such instruments is unrighteous, and that the jury cannot, in conscience, sustain it.

The last two arguments—the *à priori* and the *à posteriori*—relate to *time*, to the future and the past. The argument *à fortiori* refers to *force* and its degrees. It very often takes the form of interrogation—as indeed forcible argumentation in general inclines to do. The ideas of *less* and *greater*, then, lie under the *à fortiori* turn of argument. Says Jefferson, "Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of *himself*. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of *others?* Or have we found angels, in the form of kings, to govern him? Let history answer this question."

Burke, in defending before the Bristol electors his course on Catholic emancipation, employs a powerful, implied, *à fortiori* argument to support the justice of the emancipation. The English Catholics were most loyal when most tempted not to be so. "A great terror fell upon this kingdom. On a sudden we saw ourselves threatened with an immediate invasion, which we were at that time very ill prepared to resist. You remember the cloud which gloomed over us all. In that hour of our dismay, from the bottom of the hiding-places into which the indiscriminate rigor of our statutes had driven them, came out the Roman Catholics. They appeared before the steps of a tottering throne with one of the most sober, measured, steady, and dutiful addresses, that was ever presented to the crown. At such a crisis, nothing but a decided resolution to stand or fall with their country could have dictated such an address, the direct tendency of which was to cut off all retreat, and to render them peculiarly obnoxious to an invader of their own communion" (France). The conclusion is obvious—*à fortiori* such subjects would be loyal in *less* extraordinary times and emergencies, and their odious disabilities should have been removed.

The speech of Anthony, as written by Shakspeare, in the third act of Julius Cæsar, is for its length, unequalled, simply as an oratorical production, by any uninspired creation of ancient or modern times. That *some* speech then and there was delivered, and of power sufficient to transform the face of the Roman world, history attests; that the actual effort equalled Shakspeare's matchless imagery, is, at least, doubtful. The art of the orator plays throughout with a boundless fertility of resources. Argumentation is blended with rhetoric, and the impression is a diamond-like unity which is inimitable. The summit of the effect shoots up in the *à fortiori* form of argument. Anthony has shown the crowd Cæsar's mantle—his familiar robe. "You all do know this mantle." He associates it with an occasion of national pride:

> "I remember
> The first time ever Cæsar put it on:
> 'Twas on a summer's evening in his tent,
> *That day he overcame* the *Nervii*."

The rents of daggers in the robe are shown, —the ingratitude of Brutus—the broken heart of Cæsar—the fatal fall—are pictured, and the subdued and weeping multitude are infuriated by this startling transition, *à fortiori*—

> "What, weep you when you but behold
> Our Cæsar's *vesture* wounded? Lo!
> Here is HIMSELF—*marred*, as you see, by TRAITORS."

The argument from *example*, is based upon resemblance, and takes a variety of modes—such as instances, anecdotes, fables, comparisons. An apt citation by Menenius of the fable of the belly and the members, is said to have saved Rome from anarchy, and reunited the army and people with the patricians.

The argument from example, when its cases are multiplied, becomes an *inductive* argument. The orator's proposition is that wicked men must be unhappy. He cites Herod, the slayer of John the Baptist, and shows him devoured before his death by worms: Tiberius yelling with remorse in the caverns of Capreus; Nero sinking into the horrors of mental alienation from the visions of vengeance which haunted him. From history he assembles a multitude of fearful examples in support of his proposition, and draws his conclusion, from the *induction*, that happiness is not for the wicked.

The inductive argument is sometimes made to produce a *reductio ad absurdum*, or *ad impossibile*, *i. e.*, it proves that the conclusion attempted cannot be that it is absurd, impossible. Erskine, defending the Dean of St. Asaph, for libel against the government, thus employs it.

"Every sentence contained in this little book, if the interpretation of the words is to be settled not according to fancy, but by the common rules of language, is to be found in the brightest pages of English literature, and in the most sacred volumes of English law; if any one sentiment from the beginning to the end of it be seditious or libellous, the Bill of Rights was a seditious libel; the Revolution was a wicked rebellion; the existing government is a traitorous conspiracy against the hereditary monarchy of England; and our gracious sovereign is a usurper of the crown of these kingdoms."

The *argumentum ad hominem*, is an *enthymeme* which overturns the adversary's arguments by his own facts and words. Tuberus brought an accusation against Ligarius, that he had fought against Cæsar, in Africa. Cicero defended Ligarius, and turned the charge against his accuser. "But, I ask, who says that it was a crime in Ligarius that he was in Africa? It is a man who himself wished to be there; a man who complains that Ligarius prevented him from going, and one who has assuredly borne arms against Cæsar. For, Tuberus, wherefore that naked sword of yours in the lines of Pharsalia? Whose breast was its point seeking? What was the meaning of those arms of yours? Whither looked your purpose? your eyes? your hand?

your fiery courage? What were you craving, what wishing?"

This was the passage which so moved Cæsar that the act of condemnation of Ligarius dropped from his shaking hand, and he pardoned him

Having thus exhibited the molds in which the chief arguments of the orator are cast, we next take up the subject of *refutation*. Without logic, rhetoric is a frivolous art, and from the science of reasoning it derives its strength, and gains admittance into the understanding. *Refutation* demands the greatest address of reasoning, since it requires more skill to heal a wound than to cause it.

In refuting your adversary's arguments you establish your own, but sometimes it is needful to *begin* by disposing of his, when, for instance, you perceive from the impression they have produced, that your own proofs may be badly received. In doing this you must exhibit the defects of his reasoning, which may be several, as

Ignorance of the subject.—Here you correct and rectify his statements of facts. You may show that if the facts were as he supposes them to be, his conclusion would be just, and acceptable. It is a very forcible way of refuting (and often unfairly employed), to seize some one capital assertion of the opponent and destroy it completely by an unanswerable citation. The effect is to throw an air of distrust over all the rest. If this conspicuous assertion had been dwelt upon, and joined with some striking rhetorical figure or illustration, a certain ridicule accompanies its prostration, which is then complete. Examples of this are numerous.

In his Oration for the Crown, Demosthenes, flinging back the argument of Æschines, quotes his exclamations, "O Earth! O Sun! O Virtue!" &c., in a way that shows he must have *mimicked* him with a sneering emphasis. The following from *Junius* (the style of whose letters is admitted to be entirely oratorical) will briefly exemplify the point we are now presenting. To Sir W. Draper: "I could wish that you would pay a greater attention to the truth of your premises before you suffer your genius to hurry you to a conclusion. Lord Ligonier *did not* deliver the army (which you, in your classical language, are pleased to call a PALLADIUM) into Lord Granby's hands. It was taken from him much against his inclination, some two or three years before Lord Granby was commander-in-chief." A principal fact is flatly upset, and the unlucky expression seen in the parenthesis, heightens the effect of the retort by the ridicule which thus attaches to it. From the same nervous writer, the following extract presents an *inductive argument* along with the citation of capital facts, the quotation of the adversary's expression, and his conviction of ignorance of the subject. "You say, he (Lord Granby) has acquired nothing but honor in the field. Is the Ordnance nothing? Are the Blues nothing? Is the command of the army with all the patronage annexed to it, nothing? Where he got these *nothings* I know not; but you, at least, ought to have told us when he deserved them."

Petitio principii—or *begging the question.*—This is, probably, the commonest of the fallacies of reasoning. It consists in giving, as proof of itself, the very thing to be proved. One of Molière's comedies has a playful example. "Why does opium produce sleep? Because it possesses a *soporific* quality." The power to induce sleep, and the possession of a soporific (or sleep producing), quality are one and the same thing. Whatever is provable must be distinct from that which proves it—the evidence, from the thing evidenced. Where these two separate things are confounded, the *petitio* occurs, and the question is not proved but "begged." Any statement, which, instead of supporting the question, merely varies its expression, or assigns its incidents granting it to be true, is no more than a repetition of the assertion, and is no evidence nor proof. Such is the *petitio principii*, the phases of which are many, and the answer is *to distinguish* the new statement from proof, and identify it with the original proposition—the consequence then drawn is that, whether the proposition be, or be not true, *this* does not establish it—as seen above in the sportive instance from Molière.

The *Vicious Circle* is one or more steps further of the *question begged*. You support A by B, B by C, and then C by A. A is the base after all. Sometimes, however, two propositions may reciprocally support each other, without any detriment to right reason—in the case, say, of one of them being *known*, or *admitted*, by the opposite party, of course you may make it the ground of the other. But to prove anything unknown by something as little or less known, or something uncertain by another thing of equal uncertainty, is to fall within the compass of the *Vicious Circle.* Mr. Fox, on Parliamentary Reform, thus exposes the fallacy; "Gentlemen are fond of arguing in this vicious circle. When we contend that ministers have not the confidence of the people, they tell us that the House of Commons is the faithful representative of the sense of the country. When we assert that the representation is defective, and show that the House does not speak the voice of the people, they turn to the general election, and say, that at this period the people had an opportunity of choosing faithful organs of their opinion; and because very little or no change has taken place in the representation, the sense of the people must be the same. Sir, it is vain for gentlemen to shelter themselves under this mode of reasoning."

Imperfect Enumeration.—This is the error of defective *Induction.* A generalized conclusion is drawn from a given number of examples, but other examples which conflict with the conclusion are overlooked, or left out; as if many lakes of fresh water were named and the conclusion drawn that all such isolated bodies of water are fresh,—omitting the fact of the Caspians. Or this, "The French are white, the English are white, the Italians, Germans, Russians and Americans are white; therefore all men are white." The conclusion is erroneous because the enumeration is imperfect. There are *black* men in Guinea.

Proving too much.—The logicians say that that which proves too much, proves nothing. The common way of shaping this argument is to cite an example (if you cite several, the argument becomes *inductive*) equally in point as the one maintained, and yet evidently untenable, or absurd or impossible. Thus we may have here the arguments from *example*, *by induction*, *ad hominem*, and *reductio ad absurdum* and *ad impossibile*. In a speech in the House of Representatives on a Uniform system of Bankruptcy, *John Sargent* reasoned thus: "I fully agree that the principles of sound legislation are opposed to retrospective laws. But what are retrospective laws? A retrospective law is a law that impairs or affects the vested rights of individuals. Every man has a vested right in his property. But has a citizen of this or any other country, a vested right in any particular *remedy*, so that it can never, as to him, be either taken away or altered? If the creditor has his right, so has the debtor; and then the absurd consequence would follow, that if any part of the property of the debtor was, by law, exempted from liability, as, for instance, his land, it could never be subjected to execution. If his person was not by law subject to imprisonment, it could not be made so. The *remedy* is no part of the *contract*." Another example of Inductive reasoning refuting an argument which *proves too much*, from the same eminent statesman's speech on the Missouri question. "But is it essential to the character of a member of this Union that it should possess *all* the *powers*, or even all the *rights*, that belonged to the original States? It must then be the sovereign of all the territory within its limits. But the unappropriated lands belong to the United States. It must, too, have an unlimited right of taxation—and it must have an independent and absolute power, extending to everything within its limits—for all these powers belonged to the original States. Then, sir, not a single new State (excepting Vermont) has been properly admitted into the Union, and the practice of the government, from its foundation, has been one tissue of error and usurpation."

Logicians call a mistaking of the question *Ignoratio Elenchi*, it misses the clinch or rivet of the discussion. The remedy, and reply, is to *re-state* the issue. Thus Webster in his rejoinder to Hayne—Foote's resolution being before the Senate—begins by calling for the reading of the resolution. A clear way of stating the question is to put it both affirmatively and negatively—laying down what it is, and distinguishing it from that which has been, or may be, mistaken for it. Mr. Prentiss, in his great argument before the House of Representatives, on the Mississippi contested election, a speech which continued for three days, and won the enthusiastic applause of the first men of the country, makes his exordium by guarding against an *ignoratio elenchi:*

"The first use I shall make of the privilege accorded to me will be to set the House right as to the attitude of the question, for I perceive that many members labour under a misapprehension on this point, and I am anxious that the position I occupy in the matter should be distinctly understood. I have petitioned this House for nothing; neither have I memorialised it. I have presented myself here as a Representative from the sovereign State of Mississippi, to the Congress of the United States, and claim a seat on this floor, not as a matter of *favour*, but as a matter of *right.*"

Analogy.—This argument is never *demonstrative.* It is based, not upon a direct resemblance, but upon a resemblance of ratios. It is in form like a compound proportion; as *a* is to B, so is *c* to D. As a son is to a parent, so is a citizen to his country. To upset the fallacious use of the argument we must show that the resemblance does not hold good, or that it is assumed, or imaginary. A special weakness of this form of argument (even where the analogy is not false, but real), is that it is at best only *probable*, and the employment of it by itself is a tacit admission of the want or absence of true *demonstrative* argument. It is a trite but important remark that "analogy does not *necessarily* lead to truth."

The *fallacy* of false analogy—derived from the argument found in a true analogy—is called *non tali pro tali*—that is, *no likeness put for a likeness.* We will draw an example both of the argument, and of the refutation of the fallacy, from Alexander Hamilton's speech in the Debates on the Constitution.

"In my reasonings on the subject of government, I rely more on the interests and opinions of men than on any speculative parchment provisions whatever. *I have found that constitu-*

tions are more or less excellent, as they are more or less agreeable to the natural operation of things. But, say gentlemen, the members of Congress will be interested not to increase the number [of Representatives], as it will diminish their relative influence. In all their reasoning upon the subject, there seems to be this fallacy. They suppose that the Representative will have no motive of action, on the one side, but a sense of duty; or on the other, but corruption. They do not reflect that he is to return to the community," &c., &c. The last part is the refutation of an *incomplete induction.* In the following paragraph, Hamilton replies to the argument of a *false analogy.* "It is a harsh doctrine, that men grow wicked in proportion as they improve and enlighten their minds. Experience has by no means justified us in the supposition that there is more virtue in one class of men than in another. Look through the rich and the poor of the community, the learned and the ignorant. Where does virtue predominate? The difference indeed consists, not in the quality, but kind of vices which are incident to various classes," &c., &c. He denies that the asserted ratio is found to exist, and appeals to example, which developed, would be an induction of the facts, for proof of his denial.

FALLACY OF INTERROGATION.—We have already remarked how conspicuous *interrogations* frequently become, in rapid and imperative oratorical reasoning; the reader has also seen an example in the extract from an oration of Cicero's. The fallacy in the employment of this instrument consists in varying the queries in such a way as to institute really another inquiry while appearing to adhere to the question at issue. This fallacy is plainly referrible to that of *irrelevant conclusion.* The remedy is to re-affirm, and return to *the question.* It may likewise be sometimes overthrown by means of a parallel series of counter-questions. All depends upon a clear comprehension of the subject-matter, and a distinct statement of the *issue.*

To the same head may be referred the *ambiguity of terms*, where a term is employed in different senses. Knowledge of the language and of the special terminology, is the resource against the fallacy—which is a fruitful cause not only of self-deception, but of sophistical argumentation. As Aristotle remarks, all the fallacies may be referred to *ignoratio elenchi*, to mistake of the proposition, or misapprehension, or ignorance of it. Hence the capital importance of a *clear statement of the proposition.* As Lord Coke says with respect to a legal issue in pleading—it should be *single*, *certain*, *material*, and *triable*.

Quitting now the second branch of oratorical logic, that is, *refutation*, we shall endeavour to elucidate a very valuable device of argumentative reasoning which seems to have been too much overlooked by writers on the science. We shall call it *reasoning by tests.* It is a sort of short-hand process of investigating, illustrating and proving, and is allied to the citation of a leading fact, or facts, heretofore mentioned. The orator seizes certain determinating principles, certain limiting conditions, or depicts some prominent features of the case in point, and makes these *representative*, or determinative of the whole business. A similar expedient is found in the concise language of the mathematics, where the power of a quantity, its root, &c., are signified by *indices.* It not only renders the process of exposition simple and more apprehensible, but the grasp of the reasoning faculties upon the subject thereby becomes, at one and the same time, more comprehensive and more firm. Into narrative it infuses life by the rejection of useless details, into the statement of the subject it distributes light and clearness, and pours energy into the argumentation by the concentration which attends it. The extreme opposite style, of an exhaustive detail of undiscriminated minutiæ, has every fault of the contrary kind. It was such an exhibition that once caused Chief Justice Marshall at length to inform an unwearied pleader that he might "omit some of his points and safely *assume* that the supreme court of the United States did know *something*."

If we were regularly treating the whole subject of logic, it would be proper to point out at large the principles which preside in this process of contracting thought and language. But this must be left to a few useful examples—with the general remark that the reader must expect to find the principles in *media*, and by means of classification,—the former implying extension in his knowledge, the latter its systematic arrangement.

Burke, on the East India Bill—arguing the abuse of powers by the Company, says:

"The principle of buying cheap and selling dear is the first, the great foundation of mercantile dealing. Have they ever attended to this principle?" &c., &c.

"A great deal of strictness in driving bargains for whatever we contract is another principle of mercantile policy. Look at the contracts that are made for them," &c.

"It is a third property of trading men to see that the clerks do not divert the dealings of the master to their own benefit," &c.

"It is a fourth quality of a merchant to be exact in his accounts. What will be thought when you have fully before you the mode of accounting made use of in the treasury of Bengal?' &c., &c.

"It is a fifth quality of a merchant to calculate his probable profits upon the money he takes up to vest in business," &c., &c. He goes on to apply these *tests* to the affairs of the East India Company.

The finest orators abound in examples of the display of this powerful principle, and none more than Demosthenes and Cicero. I am tempted to translate an instance from the former; it occurs in his Oration for the Crown.

" *What should, what could, an Athenian orator do? Detect the evil in its birth, make others* *see it.* I have done so. *Guard, as far as possible, against delays, false pretexts, strife of interests, mistakes, errors, obstacles of every kind, too common amongst allied and jealous republics.* This I did. *Attack all difficulties with zeal, and ardor, in the love of duty, of friendship and concord.* I did it. On every one of these points, I defy the detection of a fault in my conduct. If it is demanded, How then has Philip triumphed? the whole world will answer for me: By his all-conquering arms, by his all-corrupting gold. It was not for me to combat the one or the other. I had no treasures, no soldiers. But with what I did have, I dare to assert that I conquered Philip. How? By rejecting his bribes, by resisting his corruption. When a man lets himself be bought, his buyer may be said to triumph over him; but he who remains uncorruptible, has triumphed over the corrupter. And thus, so far as it depended upon Demosthenes, Athens was victorious, Athens was invincible."

Here we might at once close the subject, having named, described, and illustrated from living examples, the principles of logic as applicable to argumentative speaking. And we believe that the knowledge of what is laid down in this chapter will prove of material assistance, not only in the business of public speaking, but in that of analysing and judging of what is spoken by others. Our purpose does not extend to anything beyond the title of the chapter, and is therefore confined to *convincing*, not persuasive oratory, and has naught to do with Rhetoric. As, however, Logic and Rhetoric are intimately connected, and

"Thin partitions do their walls divide,"

it seems proper enough to say somewhat upon the *disposition* of discourse, and the *order* of arguments. It is not enough, says Montesquieu, to exhibit many things to the understanding; you must exhibit them in order.

Rhetoricians reckon six parts of a discourse, viz., the exordium, proposition, narration, proof, refutation, peroration. Not that all these necessarily enter into it, but that they may do so. The first and last, are, in general, reserved for uncommon occasions. In business speaking, debate, &c., a man rises, perhaps, with a paper in his hand, a resolution, or what not. He may begin by citing a remark just made by another speaker, &c., &c. He finishes more or less abruptly, so soon as he has brought out the statement of his facts, or opinion. Cicero says that one must join to the regular disposition, another sort which avoids the rigor of precepts and accommodates itself to circumstances, and that the art itself commands you to renounce, at times, the precepts of art in the order of your discourse.

As to the *choice of proofs*. It is better to reject the light and feeble ones, and to insist upon those which are strong and convincing—present these latter distinctly, and to do so, separate them; but feebler ones should be treated in the opposite way, *i. e.* bound together like the bundle of sticks in the fable. Here is an example from Quintilian. He supposes a man to be accused of killing another whose heir he had hoped to be, and he combines several circumstances to prove the accusation. "You hoped to receive an inheritance—a rich inheritance; you were in great indigence, and actually beset by your creditors. You had offended the man whose heir you expected to be, and you knew that he contemplated changing his will." No one of these arguments alone, says Quintilian, has any great weight, but, taken together, if they strike not like the lightning, yet like hail they come down with repeated blows.

The *order of proofs* is of most importance. The natural method, according to the subject treated, is to preserve such a succession, as may, step by step, open the matter to the mind of the auditor, and link the parts so together that the chain of evidence and argumentation may arrest and envelope the mind which responds to truth and reason. Many Rhetoricians think that the best arrangement of arguments is that which begins with the more feeble and rises successively to the most cogent, so that the reasoning gathers strength as it advances—*semper augeatur et crescat orator*. This is an excellent disposition, undoubtedly, where the case admits of it. But in general, the best order is that which, at the beginning projects some forcible arguments which may open the way to a favourable attention and conviction, reserves some striking and decisive ones for the close, and disposes the less powerful proofs midway between the first and last. This is called by Quintilian the *Homeric* order, because such is the order of battle of which we read in Homer. Nestor, arraying his troops, puts in front the *élite* of the armed chariots, next the less reliable body of soldiers, and last, in reserve, a brave and numerous infantry.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE VOICE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING.

IN treating this branch of the art, we shall be as plain as possible. In the first place, as experiment is out of the question, we must endeavour to establish an understanding with the reader by *descriptions* of the phenomena which will be referred to.

The kind of voice adapted to the exercise and business of public speaking, is *not* the voice of ordinary conversation. It is a *larger* utterance. The sound originates deeper, possesses more swell, is longer drawn out, flies to a greater distance.

It is *not* the *singing* voice. The difference between these two, every ear perceives and appreciates.

Between the speaking and the singing voice is interposed the voice of *recitative.*

The speaking voice, either developed or not, is possessed by all men in different degrees, but not in a high degree by any who are unpractised in its employment.

Let the reader imagine himself calling to a person at the distance of seventy or eighty feet from him. Let him answer suddenly and earnestly, No! Let him ask the question, How? Let him give warning—FLY! FIRE! If he perform these experiments fairly and justly, he will not fail to employ in them his speaking voice. In doing this, certain observations will occur to him. He will perceive that the mouth and throat are more opened, than in ordinary speech, and that he has dwelt longer on the sounds: the chest will have been more exhausted of its air, and he will probably have found it needful as a preliminary to draw a quick inspiration, before sending forth the sudden compact volume of sound. The part of the voice thus abruptly called into play, will be the upper part of it. Especially is this the case if the vocal organs be untrained, for it is only a pretty well exercised human voice that can so exert and display itself on its lower notes.

The first attainment of vocal power, is *quantity*—the ability to *continue* the sound, to elongate the utterance. The reader may consider that *time* in utterance, in other words extended quantity, is a condition of being *heard.* Sound traverses space at a certain definite rate, and syllables grow indistinct to the ear, from the effect of distance, as objects do to the eye. Hence, in both cases, they must be enlarged in order to be well perceived. Syllables, rapidly enunciated, cannot be caught in their due proportions by the ear at a distance, as experiment easily demonstrates. We insist, therefore, rigorously upon this first quality and eminent distinction of the speaking voice—quantity—as directly related to both time and space.

As a first exercise, for breaking in the voice to its function of public and expanded utterance, a table of vowel sounds is here furnished. The words adjoined are the sounds to be used in practice.

a	as in March! Afar!
a	as in Halt! Call!
a	as in Hail! A sail! Awake!
o	as in Cold! No. Unfold. Wo!
i	as in Fire! Rise! Deny.
oo	as in Whoop! Do. Cool.
ee	as in Heed. Weep. Speed!

oi as in Boy! Deploy. Noise.
u as in Hew! Muse. Furies.

There is no difficulty in separating the vowel sounds on the left out of the words on the right, above, but at the beginning it is better to practise the *words*, and to attach a meaning, and infuse an intentional emphasis, into them. Sound and sense should not be divided in speech. The learner may *drawl* the words, by way of occasional experiment, and in order to mark to his ear the significant properties of great, prolonged quantity. A voice quite unused to this sort of exertion can rarely perform it, at once, in a satisfactory manner. Some time, and some repetition, are necessary to give the instrument of vocality the requisite degree of expansion. The want of this expansion, and of the flexibility which attends it, is no doubt the cause, together with a hurried execution, of so many injured, and indeed, ruined voices among public speakers. I think Roger Ascham it is who asserts that of all human functions that of the voice is the most improvable. And as to the influence of its judicious exercise upon the health, Dr. Rush attributes the comparative freedom of the Germans from pulmonary affections, to their much use of the voice in vocal music. Let the practice of elocution, therefore, be moderate always at first, and never *forced*, at any time. Ease and pleasantness, is a pretty good criterion of correctness in the execution of exercises. Is the performance of *any* normal function, unaccompanied with pleasure?

Following the tenor of these injunctions, the learner will soon discover a growing improvement. Let him, then, fix his attention, if the opportunity offers, upon any public speaker, and the extreme probability is that he will observe something of this sort. The speaker's voice, in the course of its flight, will exercise a manifest *choice* among the vowel sounds which are ranged in the foregoing table. This will be carried so far as, at times, to interfère with the due emphasis.

The sounds of *ee* and *oo* are the most trying to the voice, those of *a* (in far) and *o* (in bold) are in general the easiest. The former of these is that which the infant makes his *débût* upon. The cause of all this is an organic one, existing in the formation of the throat. There are comparatively few voices which can emphasize at will, and with equal indifference, *all* these long vowel sounds.

It is worth while to examine a certain connexion which subsists amongst the foregoing sounds. *Ee* and *oo*, you will find, in prolonging them, are pure, unmixed vowels; they begin and terminate in the one sound. Not so with the others. The first two a's (those in *far* and in *ball*) *end* on a faint sound of *u*—as in *burr*. All the rest vanish either in *ee* or in *oo*. Ee and oo, are in effect the *media* between vowel and consonant sounds. Ee is y and oo is w, when they are abbreviated. Ee-ou and you, oo-ave and wave, can the ear detect any real difference? The two difficult sounds, viz., *ee* and *oo* are the shibboleth of public speakers, few of whom do not, at times, throw a wrong emphasis, in order to let the voice light on some other vowel which it can play upon with better effect. I advise the young speaker to devote his continual attention to these two sounds, dwelling on them long, swelling them, forming sentences to practice, out of words which embody them, &c. The purpose is not alone the obtaining of a control over these two themselves, but he will be certain to find that he has along with that, acquired an expansion of the voice which will be perceived decidedly on all the other easier vowel sounds.

The usual division of the pitch of the voice is into upper, middle and lower, and this will answer our present purpose. Everybody knows that usually, in asking a question, the voice runs from low to high, and in answering, it turns its course, running downward. Now exaggerate this phenomenon, in order to examine it well. One calls to another, at some distance, to learn what he wants, "The *ball?*" "No! the skate!" These contrary movements of the voice, found universally, would here present themselves. The more intensified the inquiry and reply, the further up and down would the vocal slide proceed. Elocutionists of very different schools (as Smart, and Rush) recommend the practice of these slides. You take the vowels in the foregoing table, and beginning low down in pitch slowly and continually glide upward to the vanishing point —a mewing sort of sound will result—reverse the direction of the voice, letting it descend as low as convenient. Apply the same movements to the words also.

We must now form a second table of vowel sounds, which will consist of the *short* vowels of our tongue, as follows:

i as in ill, pit, wit.
e as in let, dwell, men.
o as in bog, hollow, not.
a as in hag, lambent, clan.
u as in hurl, cur, burden.
i as in sir, mirth, hers, err.
o as in book, push, full.
u as in cut, flutter, cull.

On these sounds the voice can glide readily up and down, as on the long ones, but in general it strikes them more rapidly, and emphasises them with less quantity. An exercise on these vowel sounds similar to that prescribed for the former ones, is recommended. And, let it be noticed that those others are susceptible of a brief, firm, stress, as well as these. That is, these can be prolonged, and those contracted in their utterance.

We must finish the exposition of the alphabet in regard to its spoken qualities, before furnishing some fuller examples for practice. The statement is an old one, and is still repeated in the elementary books—that *a consonant cannot be sounded by itself.* If it really could not be sounded alone, it certainly never could be in combination—for what would the combination be composed of? Let us try an experiment, on the child's lesson in syllables. Says the young speller—a—b, ab. Now take away the *a*, and what can then be enunciated is the sound of *b*. *All*—take the a from the syllable and the remnant of sound is l, which you may continue as long as you please. The mistake arises from confounding the *name* with the *power* of the consonant.

The reader will find not the least difficulty in enunciating all the consonantal sounds, separately. Now *some* of these can be prolonged, and some, are, by nature, short. Those that can be prolonged are placed below, in the order of their capability of quantity. L, m, n, r, (final) are those usually called liquids. They all take quantity. Z, zh, th, b, d, v, ng, g, j, also admit of prolongation—the rest do not. The former should be run up and down, as in questioning and replying. Try *l*, for example. You will readily find that you could employ it as a syllable and ask a question, or give an answer upon it alone. Doing this, you have the ready key to the utterance of all the others.

Orthoëpists agree in enforcing the principle that the consonants *must* never be prolonged—any of them—*before* a vowel in the same syllable.

For instance, you may pronounce swe-ll—prolonging the l—but never l-ove or *l*ow, elongating the initial l; it is a barbarism. To what use does the voice put this property in the consonants of admitting length of sound? A very simple and effective one indeed. The voice makes this property a means of adding to the great resource of *quantity* in *syllables*. It distributes a part of the sound over the consonant.

Let the reader turn to the table of short vowels, take the first word, and ask a sudden and excited question on it, thus—*ill?* He will find that the sound, quitting the vowel, rises on the continued enunciation of the *l*. Hence the need of being able to prolong those of the consonant elements which admit of prolongation. The effect, as respects syllables, is to add to the number of long ones, in speech, varying thus the resources of *quantity*. We here complete that indispensable basis of the subject, the alphabet of speech. It is seen that there is a wide difference between the elements as spoken and as spelled—for example *meat* and *meet*, *sea* and *see*, contain all the same spoken vowel, or vowel *sound*.

We proceed to describe some exercises of the vocal organs which tend directly to fit them for the severe exertion of public speaking. Several of these have not before appeared in print, but the learner may safely rely upon them, and trial will furnish a sufficient evidence of their utility.

In all ordinary cases, what the voice requires is *expansion*—a setting it free from the narrow modes of action of conversation and business. We do not now refer to depth proper, which relates to the *scale*, and is expressed by *up* and *down*, *high* and *low*; but the meaning is, that whether the pitch be high or low, a fuller, broader sound—more volume—is, generally, the requirement of the unexercised voice. *Breadth* is precisely the property we refer to as that which is usually wanting, and to its attainment the first efforts should be addressed. Were there space, we might explain how this quality of speech and utterance is connected with vocal function, but at present it suffices to describe it and indicate the modes of attaining it—the practitioner's own observation and experience will carry him further afterward.

Breath being the raw material out of which vocality is shaped, the first alteration of breathing into voice may be said to be the whisper, and that is the last form in which the human voice manifests itself—the sigh of death is utterance without articulation. Aspiration is the intermediary between resonant sound and breathing, and in that sort of passionate exertion in which voice is, as it were, choked by excess of feeling, it descends into whisper and aspiration. The letter *h*, as a sound, will thus be seen to be intimately connected with the radical functions of speech. Dr. Rush, in his "Philosophy of the Voice," fully recognizes this fact.

Let us invite notice to the common phenomenon of the sound an engine makes at a railway depot. The slowly-escaping steam sends forth an expiration not unlike the vocal quality of the letter *h*. If the reader put the aspirate *h* before each of the long vowels, and draw them out in a low, prolonged effort, in imitation of the sound just indicated, he will hit the idea we are trying to express. The sound meant is not a whisper, not husky, but it is round and full, a not unmusical murmur. The exercise may run from high to low, and the contrary, on *all* the vowels. Its effect is to mellow, deepen, soften and expand the tones of the voice.

Listening again to the engine about to start away, the steam, dry and clear, bursts forth in a deafening volume, it has found full voice, the muffled expiration is merged into pure resonant sound, the pitch is so high that it is shrill. Take, now, again, the long vowels, and putting *h* before each of them in turn, throw the voice into its upper keys, as far up the scale as is convenient, and pronounce, somewhat forcibly, and with reasonable length, the syllables Hee, hoo, hay, hah, haw, ho, how, high, hew, hoi. This is a severe exercise. It will tire the muscles of the neck. Pause five or ten minutes when fatigued, and repeat the exercise on the middle of the voice. Finish by applying it with strength on the lower notes. Your ear will discover, very early, that the contracted, thin, inefficient quality of the utterance yields to this exercise. The kind of sound produced is true effective vocality, not dissimilar to that heard in the second instance, from the locomotive engine.

There is a mode of exerting the voice in speech which, in importance, rivals that on which we have been dwelling. *Quantity* is distinguished by *time;* this other is marked by *impulse.* The former regards extension, and the latter concentration of vocal effort. The two are the great governing articles of speech, however speech may be employed. We now invite the reader's attention to the exposition of the second element, which may be called *stress.*

Whenever the animal organism is about to make a strenuous momentary effort there is a preparatory movement. Be it to lift, to leap, to strike, the breath is drawn deeply and the orifice of breathing is shut, and from the chest so filled and enlarged the act originates, and without this preparative it is impossible. The same holds good in vocal effort, taking place when a sudden, violent outcry is to be made. All experience agrees in this *fact*, hence the philosophy of it may be here omitted.

If the pupil will, then, draw a full breath,—as if about to lift a heavy weight—shutting the epiglottis for one instant, and at the next impel with a decisive effort, any one of the long vowels—a(h) for example—he will have "*exploded*" the vowel. This needs not be done violently. A little practice will enable the ear to discover that the sound is a pure and abstracted form of that which plays a conspicuous part in oral language. At first, the short vowels are the easier to manifest the quality of stress, but the practice should extend to all the vowel sounds, and, afterward, should include words. Judiciously performed, this exercise strengthens the voice, and renders it, in a high degree, audible—but the excess of it is not to be recommended—as it involves a certain harshness of character. In general, the extended sound of the long vowels, together with the abrupt utterance of the short ones, in the unaccented syllables, makes up the agreeable diversity of human speech. The learner is recommended to attain the power of *leaning and continuing* his voice with great deliberateness on all the vowels, and likewise that of striking them all with a prompt, free, and tripping utterance. These two lessons accomplished, and another, of varying the pitch, that is, going in turn, easily into the different elevations of the voice, will be a good deal gained for the purposes of effective speaking or reading.

As to the scale, a part of what we have already prescribed will assist in regard to it. An additional exercise is to select some lines, and beginning them in the lowest pitch gradually rise, in reading them, to the highest, and inversely. Walker prescribes, for this purpose, the recitation of the terrible adjuration of Macbeth to the Witches, in Shakspeare. It is a great cause of monotony, that of not varying sufficiently the pitch. Slight variations even, would relieve the sameness, both to the ear of the hearer and to the organs of the speaker. The power, to speak long and with the exertion of force, is largely dependent upon proper variety—in pitch, in time, rate of utterance, and modes of emphasis. Besides it is the *natural* way, and therefore easy and agreeable.

We are now to speak of that important matter *Emphasis*. To do this in a satisfactory manner, there must be some elementary points first inculcated. Many readers will be aware already that the force of the voice may fall, with diverse effects, upon different parts of the emphatic syllable. Dr. Rush has beautifully elucidated this topic, so obscure and indefined, before he wrote upon it. You may strike the first part of the syllable with a disproportionate force as in imperative emphasis, as "Go." "Die." "Come," uttered passionately.

The middle may receive the distinction by opening softly on the syllable, swelling the tone as it advances, and letting it fail, or faint away toward the close—"*Glori*ous." "Har*mon*ious mysteries." "To *die*." "To *sleep*."

It may be the end of the syllables that the voice presses upon—as, "Y*ou*, Prince of Wales?" "*I* told you so?" It is a sort of *jerk* at the end.

Many persons, in ordinary talking, indulge themselves in one or other of these forms of emphasis, to the neglect of the others, but all are constantly met with, and will be readily identified by an attentive observer. The first and second are more used in public utterance than the last; but he who is called to address bodies of men, ought to accustom himself to putting any one of these forms on all the vowel sounds, and also on words chosen for the purpose.

The foregoing are ways of rendering single words conspicuous; but, generally, any marked *alteration* in the ordinary current of discourse bestows emphasis. A change from vocalising to whispering is one very significant means of emphasizing; a sudden descent, or rise, in the scale, is another. A change in force, in the rate of the utterance, a pause more or less prolonged, are all means of giving emphasis, that is, *distinction* to portions of discourse. These latter belong rather to clauses and sentences, than to single words. For one example of a single way, let us suppose the passionate and insulting expression, *You lie*, is uttered. If the first word is spoken in a low key, and the second far up the scale, with the force on the first part of the vowel *i*, and this latter afterward continued downward, the feeling which accompanies it will have been expressed.

The subject of *accent* has employed and defied the ingenuity of scholars, for ages. But this is because there exist no sufficient *data* to determine clearly the nature of the Greek and Latin accentuation. As respects a living tongue the case is quite otherwise. In our English, every word of more than one syllable has one of them distinguished by accent—that is, it has more of the force of the voice upon it. Now it is found that the voice cannot conveniently interpose between two *accented* syllables more than four *unaccented* ones. In rude languages, they cannot permit even so many. Ellis, in his "Polynesian Researches," found that the natives regularly accented every *other* syllable. A similar fact is perceived among the American tribes. *We* pronounce the word Seminóle (in four syllables) with one accent, the people of that tribe call the name Séminolé. The name of one of their chiefs is pronounced by the whites, Holatóochee, by the Indians, Holátoochée.

The organs cannot enunciate consecutively, *without an hiatus, two accented syllables.* This may be considered an ultimate fact of human speech. Kéep—páce, for instance, with the accent on each word, *must* have an interval of pause between them; the article *the* can be put between them without the least addition to the time of the whole utterance. This accentual pause, exercises an important influence over emphasis. It serves to confer time on that kind of emphatic syllables which is incapable of prolongation, and obtains in this way the advantage of quantity. To exemplify this interesting phenomenon—

> "Cut—short all intermission.
> Front—to front bring thou," etc.
> SHAKSPEARE.

That is, the *time* which cannot be expended upon the short syllables is apportioned to them in the form of *pausing.* I hope the intelligent reader sees what an unforceful blunder it is in a speaker to disregard this vocal principle, which, duly observed, assists the utterance, the breathing, the sense, and the ear of the auditor. Take, for a further example, the furious exclamation of Coriolanus, "Cút me to piéces!" Here the two unaccented syllables, "me to" fill up what before in "Cut—short" was assigned to an accentual pause. The whole time of the two clauses is equal.

From the former principle the next is at once derived. The voice passes lightly over the unaccented syllables, and skips, or steps, from accent to accent. Speech is thus reduced to *measure*. In the lines from Pope, which follow, the spaces separate the measures.

"Whý then, a   Bórgia, or a   Cátiline?
Whó   knóws but   Hé whose   hánd the líghtning   fórms,
Who héaves   óld   ócean, and who   wíngs the   stórms?"

An advantage from the practise of reading the various kinds of verse, is that the voice becomes habituated to observe *measure* duly. But prose likewise requires it, and ease and force of delivery imperatively demand a proper conformity to it.

Emphasis always falls, by necessity, upon some accented syllable. The effect of accent is to distinguish words one from another. They are known as separate words by means of the accent which ties together the several syllables. A proof of this may be seen by the experiment of misplacing the accents on a succession of words which compose a sentence. A jargon will result, which, if intelligible at all, is so only by reason of the resemblance to what is previously known under true accentuation. What belongs to accent extends itself to emphasis. Without accent, words would not be distinguished from one another; without emphasis, clauses would not be. The syllable accented distinguishes the word, the word emphasized gives meaning to the sentence.

But emphasis demands yet more. It requires a pause after each subdivision into which it cuts discourse. The breathing asks for this, as well as the ear. The ear requires it because it can take in the word with its accent, without necessarily any pause, from knowing the word already, but the clause of emphasis it has to learn, and these must be separated and distinguished by intervening pauses, or the ear cannot make the arrangement of the sense. We mean, then, in fine, that emphasis *ties together* words into detached groups, forming, as it were, a species of longer words; that pauses interpose between this longer sort of words, and hence, that pauses, that is, the principal ones, for the most part, depend on emphasis. Emphasis is the law and life of discourse. Better that all else go wrong than it.

Trusting that the reader will not lightly pass over the principles now inculcated, we shall proceed to put down a number of illustrative examples of these emphasis-words—calling them thus in order to fix the idea:

"But-with-the *froward* he-was-fierce-as-*fire*."

The *italicized* words are to the clauses of meaning what accent is to individual words.

"*Poured*-through-the mellow horn her-pensive-*soul*
In-hollow-*murmurs* *died*-away."

"*Grace*-was-in-all-her motions *Heaven*-in-her-eye.
In-every-*action* *dignity*-and-love."

"*Alexander*-at-a-feast surrounded-by-*flatterers* heated-with-*wine* overcome-by-*anger* led-by-a-*concubine* is-a-forcible-*example* that-the-conqueror-of-*kingdoms* may-have-neglected-the-conquest-of *himself*."

"I-have-but-*one*-lamp by-which-*my*-feet-are-guided and-*that* is-the-lamp-of-*experience*."

"*Whence* and *what* *art*-thou *execrable*-shape?"

"If-thou-dost-*slander her* and *torture-me*
Never-*pray*-more *abandon*-all-remorse."

The foregoing must suffice for illustrations of the principles, which the reader can readily apply to any desirable extent. He will see that the thought governs the expression absolutely, and that the due interchange of sound and silence *is* intelligible speech.

In essaying to speak to bodies of men, the first and chief thing is to hit rightly, with due quantity and stress, those commanding words in the discourse, to which the others annex themselves, and to which they are subordinated. On each of them send forth the voice in the manner described at the beginning—loudly, and even violently at first, if needful. And be persuaded that speaking and talking are not the same thing, whatever may be said about a "*natural*" manner, and so forth. To impress masses of listeners, there must be something more strenuous than ordinary talk. Not thus did the Athenian "fulmine over Greece," nor Tully—who calls the right arm the *weapon* of the orator—sway the Roman senate.

The following short extract from Webster's address on the centennial birthday of Washington we select to be *spoken*. The words where the vigor of the voice should be felt are marked. We advise that the learner *quit* the tone of conversation, and setting his utterance free from its trammels and bondage, urge it forth in broad, prolonged, emphatic *speaking*. Let him possess his mind with the determination of controlling an audience, and carrying their full feelings along with him.

"But let us hope for BETTER things. Let us trust in that GRACIOUS BEING who has hitherto held our country as in the HOLLOW of his HAND. Let us trust to the influence of WASHINGTON'S example. A hundred years hence, OTHER disciples of WASHINGTON will celebrate his birth with NO LESS of sincere admiration than WE NOW commemorate it. When THEY shall meet, as WE NOW MEET, to do themselves and him THAT HONOR, SO SURELY as they shall see the BLUE SUMMITS of his native mountains RISE in the horizon, SO SURELY may they SEE, as WE NOW SEE, the FLAG of the Union FLOATING on the top of the CAPITOL; and THEN, as NOW, may the SUN in his course visit NO land more FREE, more HAPPY, more LOVELY, than THIS our OWN country."

So soon as the learner shall have caught the way of utterance which belongs to the extraordinary occasions of public speaking, so soon as he shall begin to be able to manifest it in single words and next on brief clauses, he will be able to advance to the complete attainment of the speaking voice. I think the acquisition is not much unlike learning to swim—it is something *new* attained, and once gotten is never lost. Of its value and popular appreciation, we need not stop to say anything.

In "Gardiner's Music of Nature," it is shown that a musical sound *flies further* than another kind of sound. He says that at a distance from Donnybrook, when the great fair was going forward, the notes of the violins came clear and distinct to the ear, while the duller noises and din that prevailed around them were lost, or reduced to a faint murmur. The same writer states that the connoisseurs did not seek the nearest seats when Paganini played in England, but preferred more retired places, where his exquisite instrument over-rode the storm of the orchestra. This principle obtains in the superior audibility of trained voices, which is always accompanied with an improved ease of delivery. The main ingredient of clear and resonant tone is a discharge of all huskiness or aspiration from it—except, of course, where these are expressly called for as an element of expression. The smaller the measure of breath put forth, the clearer and purer the tone, in general, produced. Because the more completely is the column of air put into vibration, the less, too, the fatigue, necessarily. With practice, the power to vibrate fully a larger expiration, is found to increase.

The ability to make one's voice travel far depends upon *ringing* it against the roof of the mouth—forcing, as it were, the breath to strike against the centre of the archway which the roof forms. I have also remarked that speakers, when addressing audiences in the open air, have, not unfrequently, a tendency to curve the lips outward, trumpet-fashion, which, of course, projects the sound. These experiments may be made on all the vowels.

We will close with an extract from an old work, on the power of music, which may interest the reader: "In the year 1714, in an opera that was performed at Ancona, there was in the beginning of the third act, a passage of recitative, unaccompanied by any other instrument but the bass, which raised, both in the professors and in the rest of the audience, such and so great a commotion of mind, that we could not help staring at one another on account of the visible change of color that was caused in every one's countenance. The effect was not of the plaintive kind. I remember well that the words expressed indignation; but of so harsh and chilling a nature that the mind was disordered by it. Thirteen times this drama was performed, and the same effect always followed, and that, too, universally; of which the remarkable previous silence of the audience to prepare themselves for the enjoyment of the effect was an undoubted sign."—*Stillingfleet.*

CHAPTER XXVIII.

RULES OF ORDER AND DEBATE.

THERE is so much business transacted in public meetings, on Boards, in Committees, etc., and on such occasions public speaking of one sort or another, is so constant a part of the procedures, that it seems very appropriate to the purpose of this work to throw together some principles and rules in regard to those matters. Few persons in this country will find it a superfluous attainment to know thoroughly, at least so much as they will find here—were it only with a view to understand fully the reports of legislative and other matters which appear from time to time in the journals. As to the conduct of Debating Societies, the principles which follow are so easily applicable to them, that we need not encumber the statements by any special directions for them.

The order of business and the rules of the English Parliament, grown from a remote period into a system, and comprised in many volumes, have descended to Congress and our State Legislatures, and finally regulate, under a modified form, the deliberations of popular assemblies.

Unless there is some special rule, the *majority* of votes decides the question.

In organizing a meeting, usually some member proposes the name of another for president, and puts it to the vote by saying, "all in favor of, etc.,—will signify the same by saying, *aye.*" After a short pause, "The contrary, *no.*" Then "Carried"—if such was the case—or "The ayes have it."

The president takes the chair, or, on formal occasions, is conducted to it, and opens the business by a brief statement of the objects of the meeting. If there are to be vice-presidents and secretaries, they are usually nominated and selected in the same manner.

The duty of the president is to preserve order, put questions, (in the manner above,) appoint committees, sign resolutions, call for papers and reports, receive and announce messages, call the business up in its order, etc., etc., and declare the adjournments.

If on the vote *vivâ voce*, the president is unable to determine whether the ayes have it, or the nays, he may call for a division, or for the former to rise, or he may appoint tellers to ascertain by counting. In case of a tie, the president is to give the casting vote. (This is the only occasion on which he votes.) Where it is requisite to record the vote, the secretary calls the names one by one, and scores down each member's vote. This is called *taking the ayes and nays* on the question.

In an assembly a member rising to speak calls "Mr. President, or Chairman, or Speaker"—the latter recognizes the one who is the first to claim his attention, by naming him, bowing or nodding to him, with "The gentleman from ——," etc., or "Mr. —— has the floor," or, in other cases, the presiding officer introduces the Speaker to the audience.

It is quite usual to appoint a committee to retire and draft resolutions, expressive of the sense of the meeting. He who proposes the committee is ordinarily selected for its chairman. When the committee returns, it reports through its chairman to the president, who directs the secretary to read the resolutions to the meeting, which are then put to the vote by the president. Or the latter may read them, and put them to the vote, separately.

A motion must be made by one member, and seconded by another; it is then stated by the president, or "being in writing, it shall be handed to the Chair and read aloud by the secretary, before debated."—*Rule. Ho. Reps. April* 7, 1789.

"When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received but to adjourn, to lay on the table, for the previous question, to postpone to a certain day, to commit,* or amend, to postpone indefinitely."—*Ho.* 1822.

"A motion to adjourn, and to fix the day of adjournment, is always in order. These two, and the motion to lay on the table, shall be decided without debate."—*Ho. Reps.* 1822. But these motions cannot be made while a member is in possession of the floor, unless he chooses to give way for them. (Jefferson's Manual.)

In every deliberative body the first necessity is the preservation of order: the next is the order of the business before it. But as both these depend upon the question whether the meeting will continue to be held, or not, the motion to *adjourn* has the precedence of all others. Next to the motion to adjourn are questions of *privilege* and questions of *order* as these relate intimately to the organization of the body.

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* "To commit"—to refer the matter to a committee.

The next, after these, is the order of the business, and here there should be but one chief proposition, or *main* question, and if its terms are not simple, and its purpose single, it may be *divided*, on motion. To this subject the debate should be, for the time, directed and confined.

When a question is before the body, the motion to *lay it on the table*—or as the phrase is, "to table" it, has precedence of all (except the motion to *adjourn*, as already stated). It can neither be debated, nor amended, and if passed disposes of the question, till regularly called up at another meeting.

The motion for the *previous question*, cuts short all debate by bringing the amendments and the question itself at once to a test vote. But from its odium as a "gag law," by the present rules of the House of Representatives, the *previous question* must be demanded by a *majority* of the members present, or it cannot be entertained. The motion is neither debatable nor amendable.

The motion *to postpone*, if indefinitely, evidently, disposes finally of the question. It may be amended by a motion to specify a day, but not otherwise, nor is it debatable.

Amendments.—These usually relate to the parts and details of the main question, but they may go so far as to substitute a new one, by moving to strike out all after the word "*Resolved.*" And the amendment itself may be treated similarly, *i. e.*, by another amendment, it may be totally displaced, and substituted. There may be an amendment of an amendment, but the process can go no further, as that would be travelling too far beyond the subject-matter. Obviously, irrelevant matter is not admissible, under the form of an amendment. (Rule of Ho. of Reps.) An amendment once accepted cannot be altered, nor one once rejected cannot be again proposed. But the object may be reached by embodying the proposed alteration in a motion substantially different, as containing more substance—making it a part, *e. g.* of a more extensive clause. And this is the only way. "A motion to strike out the enacting words of a *Bill* shall have precedence of a motion to amend; and if carried, shall be considered equivalent to its rejection."—*House of Reps.*, *March* 13, 1822.

Motions for the *Reading of papers*, may be made when the papers are either necessary to the giving of a vote, or pertinent to the question, but where the reading would create delay, etc., it will not prevail. If the report of a committee is ordered to be printed, it is not usual to call for its reading.

A motion may be withdrawn by its mover, unless objected to, before amendment, but not after, and when stated from the chair it is regarded as the property of the whole body.—*Ho. Reps.*, 1789.

"A motion *to suspend* the standing rules cannot usually be carried by less than a vote of two-thirds.

Motion to reconsider (a vote) takes precedence of all but the motion to *adjourn.* It can be moved only by one who voted *for* the resolution.

Accordingly, members sometimes vote in the *affirmative* in order to entitle themselves to move a reconsideration. And upon a motion to reconsider, a motion to lay it upon the table may be made. That is, a member may move to "table" a motion to reconsider, which, if carried, disposes of the question, for that time.

In Congress bills must be introduced either upon the report of a committee, or else by motion for leave. Every bill must have three several "readings" on different days. Upon the second reading, the bill is ready for commitment, or engrossment, before passing to its final reading. And after commitment and report of a bill to the House, at any time before its passage, it may be recommitted, *i. e.*, sent again to a committee.

COMMITTEES

Are—*select*, *standing*, and *of the whole*. *Special* Committees are for an express purpose and are discharged upon the acceptance of their *Report.* Standing Committees are for permanent branches of business, and have, usually, more members than the former. In the House of Representatives some of the *Standing Commit-*

tees are, "Ways and Means," "On the Judiciary," "On Foreign Affairs," "On Territories."

Committee of the Whole is formed by motion of some member, seconded and put to the vote, which, when carried, is followed by the president's naming some member to take his own place. When the Committee rises, the president resumes his place, and the Chairman of the Committee reports to *him* the progress of said Committee. If, during the sitting of the Committee a *quorum* of the whole body be not present, the Committee must "rise" at once. The *proceedings* of the Committee of the Whole are not matters for record. There are other differences between the Committee and the whole assembly. For example, the Committee of the Whole cannot *adjourn*—it can only *rise*. Hence that privileged question does not then subsist. Besides this, in Committee of the Whole, the *previous question* cannot be called, nor the *ayes* and *nays* demanded—nor can anything be referred to a Committee, nor can an infraction of the rules of order be punished—it must be reported to the House. Finally, there is no limitation upon the times a member may speak, and no appeal from the Chairman's decision.

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